



REVOLUTIONARY WORKER

*Voice of the
Revolutionary Communist Party, USA*

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NO!

NO to Bush and All That He Stands For

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Be Expressed in This Election**

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From Dictatorship and



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Three Main Points

by Bob Avakian Chairman of the RCP,USA

What do we in the Revolutionary Communist Party want people to learn from all that is exposed and revealed in this newspaper? Mainly, three things:

1 *The whole system we now live under is based on exploitation—here and all over the world. It is completely worthless and no basic change for the better can come about until this system is overthrown.*

2 *Many different groups will protest and rebel against things this system does, and these protests and rebellions should be supported and strengthened. Yet it is only those with nothing to lose but their chains who can be the backbone of a struggle to actually overthrow this system and create a new system that will put an end to exploitation and help pave the way to a whole new world.*

3 *Such a revolutionary struggle is possible. There is a political Party that can lead such a struggle, a political Party that speaks and acts for those with nothing to lose but their chains: The Revolutionary Communist Party, USA.*

This Party has the vision, the program, the leadership, and the organizational principles to unite those who must be united and enable them to do what must be done. There is a challenge for all those who would like to see such a revolution, those with a burning desire to see a drastic change for the better, all those who dare to dream and to act to bring about a completely new and better world: Support this Party, join this Party, spread its message and its organized strength, and prepare the ground for a revolutionary rising that has a solid basis and a real chance of winning.

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Our Vanguard is the Revolutionary Communist Party

Our Leader is Chairman Avakian

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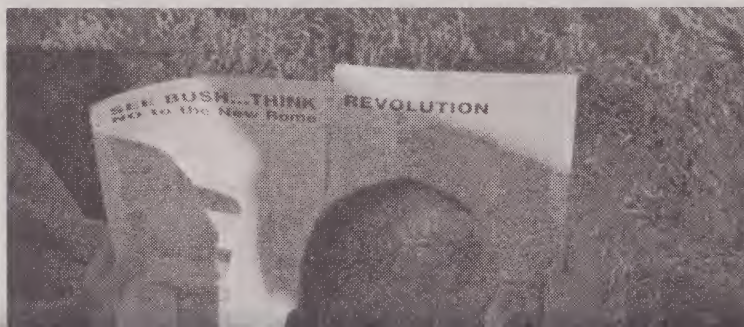
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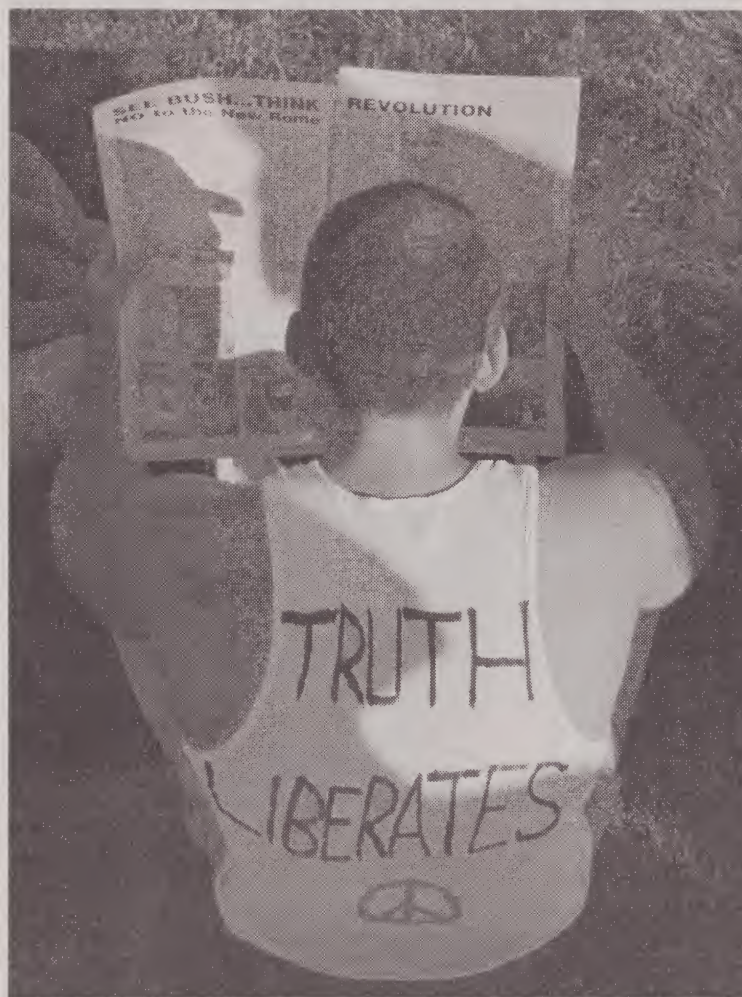
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To Our Readers: In keeping with our regular publication schedule, the *Revolutionary Worker* will not be published next week. The next issue, #1258, will be dated November 14, 2004 and will appear during the week of November 8, 2004.

The Will of the People Will Not Be Expressed in This Election

There is a big problem.

Millions of people are looking at the U.S. presidential election as a crucial turning point in world events. And at the same time the workings of this system have worked coldly to stifle their voices and choices.

As Bob Avakian, the leader of the Revolutionary Communist Party, says in the online talk *Elections: Democracy and Dictatorship, Resistance and Revolution*: “Many people want this election to be a referendum about the Bush program and in particular the whole war program, the whole juggernaut of war and repression, this rolling monster that’s unfolding. Well, this election, as [the media and politicians] are telling us, *will* be a referendum on war, but not in the way we might like and many people who want to vote for Kerry would wish. It is, as they are saying explicitly, going to be a referendum on who could be the best *commander in chief*, who has the best war program to carry out the so-called war on terror.” (audio online at www.bobavakian.net)

We are living through a time when huge historic issues are being decided, where powerful forces are in play, and many possible outcomes could emerge.

And where huge sections of the people sense they have been crudely cut out of events—betrayed by the workings of this election, and by those who control it.

Over these agonizing last months, a suffocating NON-choice has been imposed *inside this election process*—at a time when millions have awakened to politics, many for the first time, and decided that here and now they *need* to influence world events and the future. Millions of people are living through this election season with open eyes, horror and mounting alienation.

This is a time that demands clear thinking and urgent, massive, and creative resistance—based on a strategic understanding of the stakes for the power structure and the people.

This is a time when people need to deliver an unmistakable NO—so that whoever wins the election, it is very clear that there is NO mandate for the whole agenda of war and repression, and that the people are serious about defeating

power. Millions of people are still furious about the coup-like action of the high court that brought George Bush to power in 2000. And now, four years later, the fraud has already started again—Black voters have faced intimidation and disenfranchisement, including in key “swing states” like Florida. And new electronic vote fraud may be in place for “winning” in places with razor thin margins.

This summer it came out that there had been high-level “contingency planning” for *canceling* or *postponing* the elections in case of some major pre-election attack. And then, in mid-September, the FBI announced that “terrorists” were in the U.S. planning a pre-election attack. This whipped up new hysteria within the elections and unleashed new police intimidation of targeted immigrant populations. The *Washington Post* (Sept. 23) now reports that these FBI warnings were based on bogus information—and yet, somewhere in the grim machinery of state, some other “October Surprise” may be pre-planned to re-select the current president.

Election 2000 saw the Republican Party unleash bullies to intimidate people who were trying to recount the Florida ballots. Not only have the right-wing forces been building up within the circles of power in the U.S., not only have they been cultivating a whole officer corps within the U.S. military and putting their allies in the Supreme Court, but they have also built up a whole religious, fundamentalist Christian movement, which is essentially a Christian fascist movement—a non-thinking segment of the population, inspired in their non-thinking fundamentalism by the president himself.

Election 2004 has already seen the archbishop of Colorado issue a proclamation that it is a “sin” to vote for Kerry because he supports the right to abortion and stem-cell research; we have already seen the evangelical church mobilizing for Bush because they claim it is “God’s will”—while Bush himself claims that he acts on instinct and word from God rather than reality and reason. And it remains to be seen how such Christian fascist forces—inside and outside the military—would respond to a Kerry victory.

We don’t yet know if and how the God-hoof of this class

U.S. military power for further moves—aimed at subduing Afghanistan or Iran, or North Korea.

And then, it is part of the modern dynamics of American politics that Republican operatives denounce Kerry as virtually treasonous and “soft on terrorism”—while Kerry puts a raw imperialist spin on the “Pottery Barn” rules: We broke Iraq, and even if that was a mistake, now we own it.

People don’t want to live in a New Roman Empire—that rules and threatens the world, and sets up a tightening Christian fascist state in the “homeland.” A clear majority of the Democratic Party base supports quick withdrawal from Iraq. And yet none of this was allowed to be heard in the official election chatter.

And what are people offered: the chance to “hold their nose and vote for Kerry,” hoping it “will do some good.”

And when you look at all this with open eyes, it is starkly and increasingly clear that the will of the people will not be expressed in this election!

Raising Our Heads At a Historic Moment

Bob Avakian has been working intensely to wrench something different out of this moment—and to raise the sights of us all to the ways and possibilities of doing that.

In *Elections: Democracy and Dictatorship, Resistance and Revolution* he really dissects the current situation around the election. He breaks down why Bush is doing what he is doing and why Kerry is doing what he is doing—how they are both “auditioning” for who can be the best commander-in-chief to represent the larger interests of the U.S. monopoly imperialist ruling class; and why being confined by the terms and logic of this election is very dangerous for the people.

He brings out the deep strategic global interests of the U.S. power structure—why the Bush agenda has had so much initiative; why it is dangerous to hope that the Democrats can be relied on to oppose this agenda; and why people need to unite very broadly in the kind of resistance

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And it is a time when there is a tremendous opening and potential impact for connecting people to a fresh and serious vision of profoundly changing the world.

As we go to press, the electoral season is moving towards a decisive juncture, which may bring unexpected dramas and dangers.

The system is now moving to choose its next commander-in-chief.

It is not yet known which of the two main candidates will be picked. It is not even known *how* the winner will be picked. Still-hidden power-plays and fraud may decide the outcome.

It is clear what the Bush regime is willing to do to stay in

elections in case of some major pre-election attack. And then, in mid-September, the FBI announced that "terrorists" were in the U.S. planning a pre-election attack. This whipped up new hysteria within the elections and unleashed new police intimidation of targeted immigrant populations. The *Washington Post* (Sept. 23) now reports that these FBI warnings were based on bogus information—and yet, somewhere in the grim machinery of state, some other "October Surprise" may be pre-planned to re-select the current president.

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We don't yet know if and how the *final* hours of this election will be strong-armed. But we do *already know* how this whole process has *already been* rigged and manipulated, *all along*.

Last year, for a few moments, excitement jelled behind Howard Dean, who spoke in angry language about the Bush regime and its Iraq war.

But then Dean was rudely shut down before the Democratic primaries really started, by the Democratic Party establishment and the media. He was labeled unelectable, and everyone was told to support the approved candidate—Senator John Kerry, a man who carefully supported the fascist Patriot Act and granted Bush war powers in Iraq.

Bush defends his brutal and unjustified invasion of Iraq—and his larger war on the world. And John Kerry insists *he* will lead the conquest of Iraq to final victory, and free up

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He brings out the deep strategic global interests of the U.S. power structure—why the Bush agenda has had so much initiative; why it is dangerous to hope that the Democrats can be relied on to oppose this agenda; and why people need to unite very broadly in the kind of resistance that can not only oppose but defeat what he calls the "juggernaut of war and repression."

And urging the listener to "fasten your seat belts," he takes us on a unique ride into a different future.

Chairman Avakian argues forcefully that, despite appearances, this system is outmoded and vulnerable—that its intolerable oppression can be overthrown, and that we can together forge a new society filled with the ferment of change and liberation.

At a time when official and unofficial verdicts have written off the most radical revolution as "impossible and undesirable," Bob Avakian has been creatively re-envisioning the whole communist project.

In the film of an historic talk in 2003—*Revolution: Why It's Necessary, Why It's Possible, What It's All About*—

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More than half a million people march in the streets of New York City during the Republican National Convention, August 29, 2004.

Bob Avakian Speaks

Downloadable audio files of talks and interviews with Bob Avakian are available on the Internet at the following site.

These new talks by Bob Avakian are available at the “Bob Avakian Speaks” website

bobavakian.net

- “Elections, Democracy and Dictatorship, Resistance and Revolution”
- “Christianity and Society—The Old Testament, the New Testament, Christian Fascism, Social Change and Revolution”
- “Bob Avakian Speaks to the People: God Doesn’t Exist – And We Need Liberation Without Gods”

This site also includes a link to an excerpt from Bob Avakian’s interview with revolutionary journalist Michael Slate. This is the first of a series of excerpts from the interview, broadcast on L.A.’s KPFK show “Beneath the Surface” on September 7, 2004. Chairman Avakian speaks about the elections and the stakes of this moment.

Election

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Chairman Avakian takes us on a journey from the madness of this society to a future worth living in: from the enforced powerlessness of capitalist democracy, the restless aggression and infuriating racism of U.S. society to a new socialist society ruled by the oppressed—a society that the majority of the people, including the millions of artists and

planet and how the world could be radically different.

In their hateful and repulsive way, men like Bush and Cheney and Rumsfeld dare to remake the world—to reshape international politics and economics in their interests, to enforce a transformation of the whole Middle East at the point of their guns and missiles.

And the masses too—in our millions—have to dare to think about remaking the world—whether or not one agrees with the whole vision put forward by Chairman Avakian, his challenge to wrest a new and liberated world out of the great flux, oppression, change and crisis that lie ahead needs to be given a serious hearing.

and covert operations that is literally remaking the international order by force. And meanwhile, within the U.S., long-standing legal rights to trial, privacy, and protection from profiling and surveillance are being torn away, and replaced by the raw logic of a growing police state. There is a plan to literally establish permanent rightwing control over the U.S. state—cementing the Supreme Court, the Congress, the Presidency and the military corps for a generation. And it is known that if Bush returns to power, we don’t just face “more of the same”—but instead we face new and dangerous leaps, from a crew that believes no one and nothing must stand in the way of U.S. global domination.

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And it is vital to stop and think deeply over this: Because no other leader in this country dares talk about this. And because this vision is not just daring but intensely practical and rooted in a dynamic analysis of the real world.

What would it mean for this revolutionary vision and analysis to connect deeply, now, with the millions of people who are looking hard for a way to oppose Bush and everything he represents?

What would it mean if the DVD of this historic talk, *Revolution: Why It's Necessary, Why It's Possible, What It's All About*, and the online talk *Elections: Democracy and Dictatorship, Resistance and Revolution* and other online talks were played and debated wherever people gather to discuss the madness of Bush's America? What would it mean if artists and scientists, revolutionary youth, and proletarians were wrestling with the questions raised about the intellectual life of society and the path to communism in Avakian's *Dictatorship and Democracy, and the Socialist Transition to Communism*?

What would it mean if the leadership and analysis of Chairman Avakian were able to connect to millions of people—including many who will undoubtedly have lots of questions and disagreements with these radical new theses? What would it mean if a whole new dynamic and a whole new conversation got the initiative in society and people were able to lift their heads and breathe some fresh air—instead of being reduced to "holding their noses" and "picking the lesser of two evils"? What would it mean if large new circles of people were able to analyze and change the

planet and how the world could be radically different.

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And from this sweeping perspective of what the world could be like and how we could get to a different world, Bob Avakian has powerfully pointed out the importance of uniting all who can be united in resistance NOW: "Once again, the point, clearly, is that whether or not people vote in this election for all those who see the real danger—the very danger that makes them want to vote for Kerry, and to urge others to vote for Kerry, even knowing what Kerry is, and is not—that understanding of the great danger and its immediacy should make people feel compelled to act, and to call on, encourage and help mobilize many others to act, outside of and beyond the elections and the electoral framework—to build now, and in an ongoing way, the most powerful mass opposition and resistance that refuses to be bound by the terms of mainstream politics or by the notions that this politics represents the 'ultimate word' on the 'will of the people.'" ("Food For Thought While Agonizing Over Bush and Everything He Stands For," RW # 1254)

And what happens if we DON'T do that?

What happens if our discontent is penned into the "regular channels" and deflated by the assumption that "nothing else is possible"?

How much would be wasted if the anger and energy of this moment gets beaten into despair after a Bush victory?

Back in power, Bush would claim popular legitimacy and support for all the madness his crew unleashes next. Can we allow that to happen unopposed and unexposed?

And, on the other side, how much would be lost if the

and covert operations that is literally remaking the international order by force. And meanwhile, within the U.S., long-standing legal rights to trial, privacy, and protection from profiling and surveillance are being torn away, and replaced by the raw logic of a growing police state. There is a plan to literally establish permanent rightwing control over the U.S. state—cementing the Supreme Court, the Congress, the Presidency and the military corps for a generation. And it is known that if Bush returns to power, we don't just face "more of the same"—but instead we face new and dangerous leaps, from a crew that believes no one and nothing must stand in the way of U.S. global domination.

And, through all the twists and turns of an electoral circus, Kerry has made it clear that his presidency would continue the same essential project, even while he differs right now over some of the terms, over the pace and the specific forms with which to implement this program—and some of the extremes to which it should be carried out at this time.

And even if the final selection goes Kerry's way, huge parts of the power structure sit in the hands of these openly rightwing forces—who will push aggressively for Kerry to carry out their program while at the same time tearing him down.

Whatever else happens in this election, the political armies of Christian-fascists and rightwing operatives will not be dispersed by votes, and the power centers that finance and direct them will press ahead in their relentless grab for final and overall power.

They are making an historic grab for the world—taking great risks, unleashing great resources, sending out many thousands of people to kill and die.

Will something else, something powerful and positive, be wrenched out of this moment? Will the people express their will *outside* the stifling official box of the election—and carry their resistance forward into the whole next period—even under conditions of heightened repression?

Will the people act openly and in mass or be paralyzed if the election is stolen or cancelled by the fascist gang?

The reckless extremism of all this is putting great forces into motion against the current regime. Their lies have come out. Their Abu Ghraib crimes are exposed. The insurgency in Iraq has become more powerful much faster than any-

intellectuals, would want to live in a society in transition to a whole new communist world.

And it is vital to stop and think deeply over this: Because no other leader in this country dares talk about this. And because this vision is not just daring but intensely practical and rooted in a dynamic analysis of the real world.

What would it mean for this revolutionary vision and analysis to connect deeply, now, with the millions of people who are looking hard for a way to oppose Bush and everything he represents?

What would it mean if the DVD of this historic talk, *Revolution: Why It's Necessary, Why It's Possible, What It's All About*, and the online talk *Elections: Democracy and Dictatorship, Resistance and Revolution* and other online talks were played and debated wherever people gather to discuss the madness of Bush's America? What would it mean if artists and scientists, revolutionary youth, and proletarians were wrestling with the questions raised about the intellectual life of society and the path to communism in Avakian's *Dictatorship and Democracy, and the Socialist Transition to Communism*?

What would it mean if the leadership and analysis of Chairman Avakian were able to connect to millions of people—including many who will undoubtedly have lots of questions and disagreements with these radical new theses? What would it mean if a whole new dynamic and a whole new conversation got the initiative in society and people were able to lift their heads and breathe some fresh air—instead of being reduced to “holding their noses” and “picking the lesser of two evils”? What would it mean if large new circles of people were able to analyze and change the world using the penetrating scientific method and approach that Bob Avakian teaches and applies?

For decades, everyone has been told “nothing else is possible.” Now what would it mean for people to tear that myth apart and explore Chairman Avakian's re-envisioning of socialist society that upholds the historic achievements of the past, while breaking new ground on how to do away with all oppression and exploitation and have a world that people would really want to live in—a radical new synthesis of how proletarian power would be exercised he calls the “solid core with a lot of elasticity.” (See “A World We Would Want to Live In,” page 6.)

What would it mean for our struggle today to be connected to the future—like a visionary bridge from the intolerable injustices of capitalism to a classless communist world without oppression?

It would have a profound and multiplying effect on what was possible—both today and from now on—if all this was woven into the very fabric of political and intellectual struggle and debate today.

Chairman Avakian has worked to “chart the uncharted course”—to lay bare a path to revolution, even in a powerful rogue superpower like the USA. And, as those who have seen and heard him speak have discovered, things look very different once you dare to consider the possibility of actually overthrowing the monstrous system that dominates the

world. And how we could get to a different world, Bob Avakian has powerfully pointed out the importance of uniting all who can be united in resistance NOW: “Once again, the point, clearly, is that whether or not people vote in this election for all those who see the real danger—the very danger that makes them want to vote for Kerry, and to urge others to vote for Kerry, even knowing what Kerry is, and is not—that understanding of the great danger and its immediacy should make people feel compelled to act, and to call on, encourage and help mobilize many others to act, outside of and beyond the elections and the electoral framework—to build now, and in an ongoing way, the most powerful mass opposition and resistance that refuses to be bound by the terms of mainstream politics or by the notions that this politics represents the ‘ultimate word’ on the ‘will of the people.’” (“Food For Thought While Agonizing Over Bush and Everything He Stands For,” RW # 1254)

And what happens if we DON'T do that?

What happens if our discontent is penned into the “regular channels” and deflated by the assumption that “nothing else is possible”?

How much would be wasted if the anger and energy of this moment gets beaten into despair after a Bush victory?

Back in power, Bush would claim popular legitimacy and support for all the madness his crew unleashes next. Can we allow that to happen unopposed and unexposed?

And, on the other side, how much would be lost if the resistance of the people to Bush and everything he stands for becomes dispersed by the collective “sigh of relief” that would likely follow a Kerry victory? What happens if illusions about “buying a little time with Kerry” come crashing down, and the sense of betrayal and powerlessness leaves people paralyzed?

Are the people going to be so locked into the myths of “keeping America safe” that they can be stampeded by suspicious new “incidents”—while power is seized again in illegitimate ways, and while new police powers are imposed in the name of “danger” and “emergency”?

These outcomes would be a disaster for the future and for the people of the world.

There is a genuine fight going on over the future, both open and hidden:

The rulers of the U.S.—these ambitious emperors who dream of a global version of the Roman empire—they intend to stifle and suppress any challenge inside and outside this country. They intend to treat resistance as illegitimate, treasonous, and “pro-terrorist.” They are not interested in “listening” to the people. And don't care what the people (here or anywhere else in the world) want or need.

Let us be clear on what they plan!

Bush and his crew have become the spearhead and symbol for a crusade to impose tighter U.S. domination over the whole world. This is a sweeping operation of war, threats

and, of course, Kerry has made it clear that his presidency would continue the same essential project, even while he differs right now over some of the terms, over the pace and the specific forms with which to implement this program—and some of the extremes to which it should be carried out at this time.

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The reckless extremism of all this is putting great forces into motion against the current regime. Their lies have come out. Their Abu Ghraib crimes are exposed. The insurgency in Iraq has become more powerful much faster than anyone—certainly in the Pentagon—expected.

In the U.S. and even among the U.S. troops, there is a deep and growing sense that the war in Iraq is not about “protecting our loved ones at home” but about great ambitions, corporate wealth and global power. There is fear, distrust and even hatred of the narrow-minded religious fanatics like Ashcroft and Bush, who actually claim their god approves prison camps and bombing runs—and endorses their bigoted morality.

There is a sense that the future, left in their hands, would be a nightmare.

We are living through the collision of two very different futures—the potential in the overall current situation for two very different extremes—is getting concentrated in this “moment” around the elections and their aftermath. Whatever happens with this election, it will be big. A great deal is at stake for both sides—both the ruling class establishment of the U.S. and for the people (both here and around the world).

When the dust settles—if it does settle!—from this whole election episode, will we be ready for the future?

Many people still feel the bitter taste of the 2000 election.

After all the hype about elections representing “the will of the people” and “every vote counts”—the system ruled that it didn’t matter *how* people voted in the election. There was never a recount of the votes in the Florida balloting and when the U.S. presidency was decided by a vote—it was not the vote of the people—but of the Supreme Court, who selected George Bush by a vote of 5 to 4.

The election of 2000 caused millions of people to question that something was terribly wrong with the electoral process. Comparisons were made to corrupt elections in Third World countries—where the U.S. arrogantly sends their emissaries to oversee elections. And there were offers from several African countries, the Russian Duma, and Cuba’s Fidel Castro to send election observers to help with future U.S. elections.

As the 2004 elections near, it is becoming clear that ruling class forces grouped around Bush are preparing, once again, to steal the election and violate people’s democratic rights. This election campaign has already been characterized by vote theft and the intimidation of Black and Latino voters.

The Purging of Black Voters

The theft of the 2000 election actually started well before election day. Jeb Bush was (and is) the governor of Florida. The state’s election counting machinery is controlled by his appointees. And he promised during the presidential campaign that he would deliver the state for his brother.

Five months before the election, Florida’s Republican Secretary of State Katherine Harris ordered the removal of 94,000 names from Florida’s voter rolls on grounds that they were felons. Voter rolls contain the names of all eligible, registered voters. If you’re not on the list, you don’t get to vote.

State law in Florida (and several other states) denies voting rights to “felons” (meaning anyone who has ever been convicted of a felony-level legal offense).

These laws developed in the 1800s as part of the Jim Crow system of white supremacy, which developed elaborate

Stolen Elections: Then and Now



likelihood that a Black voter would have their vote disqualified was eight times that for whites!

One reason for this is that poor counties, with higher proportions of Black and Latino people, were routinely and deliberately given the worst voting machines — i.e., the ones most likely to produce spoiled votes.

For example, as British reporter Greg Palast points out in the November 2004 issue of *Harpers*, in Gladsden, Florida’s only Black-majority county, one vote in eight was spoiled in 2000.

In contrast, neighboring Leon County lost almost no votes. Why? Leon County voting booths were equipped with high-tech optical scanners which voters could use to check their own ballots.

Once again, it is no mystery what is going on here: Conservative state officials throughout the U.S. often assume that Black voters are a “solid” bloc voting against them, and so they have every interest in suppressing the Black vote as much as possible. They do this by permanently reducing the number of eligible voters. And they do it by disqualifying as many Black votes as possible. And they do it by “gerrymandering”—often by arranging the borders of voting districts so that Black voters have as little influence as possible.

In many ways, the “hanging chads” controversies of today have a deep historical connection to the “hanging trees” of the Jim Crow South.

And it is not just in the South, of course. For example, the head of the U.S. Supreme Court William Rehnquist started his political career as a “poll watcher” in Arizona—deliberately targeting Black and Latino voters in the polling stations, challenging their right to vote, and seeking to harass, disqualify or intimidate them.

Stopping the Count

When the electoral college looked tied, Gore initially demanded that the votes be recounted in four Florida counties.

Powerful forces around Bush swung into operation—in both Florida and Washington, DC—to stop this. They opposed the recount in court. They mobilized Jeb Bush’s appointees to obstruct the recounts at the county level.

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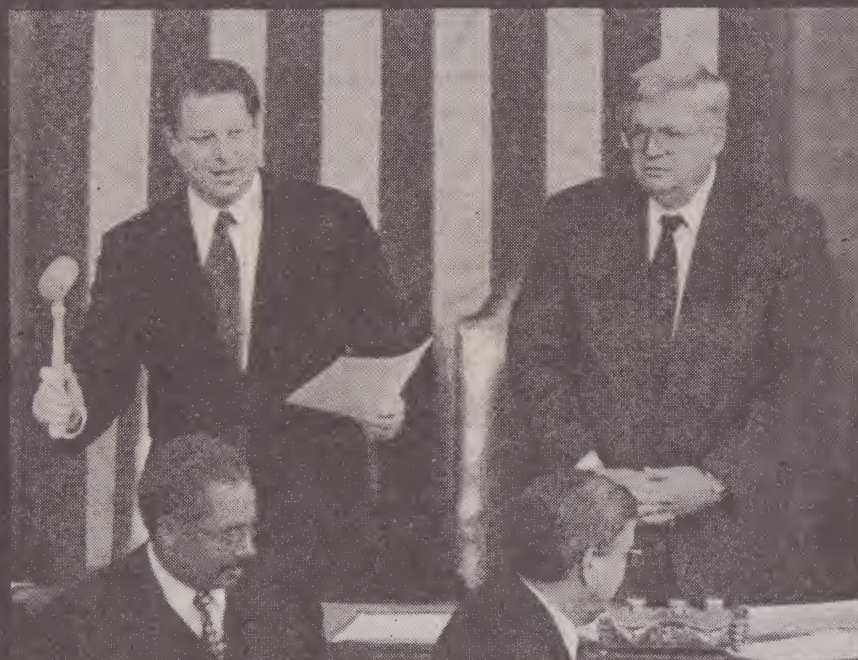
These laws developed in the 1800s as part of the Jim Crow system of white supremacy, which developed elaborate means to deprive Black people of any political power or legal rights. Under the "Black Codes," Black people were sentenced to forced labor on chain gangs in large numbers—often for ridiculously small offenses or under conditions of gross injustice. And the white supremacist state governments added the additional penalty of stripping voting rights from them for the rest of their lives. Northern Florida, and especially the Florida panhandle, was part of the plantation areas of the Jim Crow South, and Florida's state and county governments were part of that nightmare legacy.

These tactics continued in modern times, even after the formal structure of Jim Crow segregation was abolished in the late 1960s.

Black and Latino communities have been heavily targeted by the massive campaigns of the so-called "war on drugs," and Black people have gone to prison in much higher percentages than white people (even though large numbers of drug users and dealers are white).

The number of people in prison has quadrupled since 1980 and, for the first time in recent history, Black and Latino people again are a majority of those behind bars. Black men, in particular, form a majority of the four million ex-prisoners

and Now



Al Gore gavels down members of the Congressional Black Caucus as they object to the Florida electoral vote, January 6, 2001.

off a Black Mr. Green, but not a single white Mr. Green.

Roughly 54 percent of those on the list were Black, while Black people make up just about 15 percent of Florida's statewide population.

Investigative reporter Greg Palast has examined the list of 94,000 names and found that *only 3 percent* of the names on the list could actually be verified as felons. In fact, there were hundreds of names on the list who were obviously listed in error

2000 election might hang on who won in Florida.

Nationally, Vice President Al Gore got more votes than Bush—but the U.S. Constitution says that the popular vote does not decide the outcome of the election. (This continuing outrage is itself rooted in the compromises over slavery made by the so-called Founding Fathers in the original Constitutional Convention—Southern slave states were given extra electoral votes by counting their African slaves—who had no

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Powerful forces around Bush swung into operation—in both Florida and Washington, DC—to stop this. They opposed the recount in court. They mobilized Jeb Bush's appointees to obstruct the recounts at the county level.

And, at one point, when it looked like a recount might be completed, a group of hardcore Republican operatives—aides to rightwing Republican congresspeople—stormed into the elections office and staged the now notorious "Brooks Brothers Riot"—banging on the walls, shouting "stop the count," and actually intimidated election officials out of counting the ballots.

Speaking to this incident Bob Avakian, Chairman of the RCP,USA, said: "*Now, that was significant in itself but it was also symbolic of something much bigger than that particular incident. What it's symbolic of is that these forces are quite willing to call into motion this fascistic kind of force that they've built up when they feel that they need it, and they're willing to bring it all the way into motion and turn this into a whole other kind of religious, fundamentalist, fascistic society if they feel that's where they need to go.*" ("The Pyramid of Power And the Struggle to Turn This Whole Thing Upside Down," Revolutionary Worker #1237, April 25, 2004, available at rwor.org)

What stands out, by contrast, is that Gore and the Democrats were very UN-willing to mobilize any forces—especially Black people—in the streets to oppose the stealing of this election. When examining the

ical power or legal rights. Under the "Black Codes," Black people were sentenced to forced labor on chain gangs in large numbers—often for ridiculously small offenses or under conditions of gross injustice. And the white supremacist state governments added the additional penalty of stripping voting rights from them for the rest of their lives. Northern Florida, and especially the Florida panhandle, was part of the plantation areas of the Jim Crow South, and Florida's state and county governments were part of that nightmare legacy.

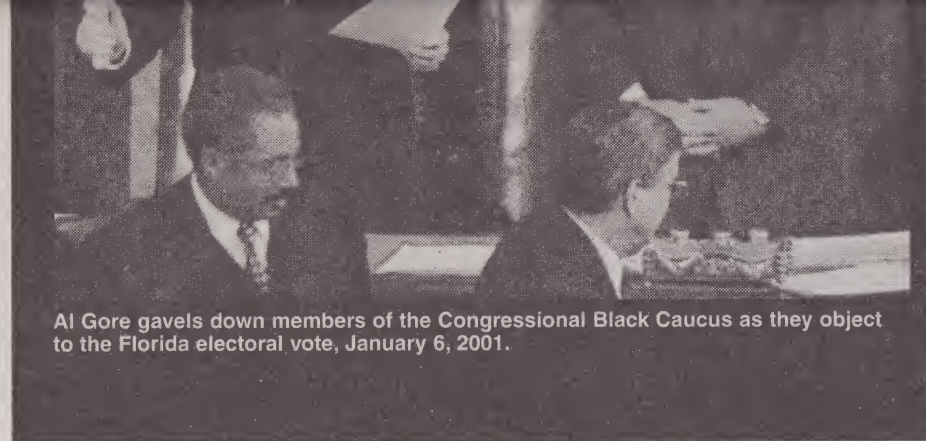
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The number of people in prison has quadrupled since 1980 and, for the first time in recent history, Black and Latino people again are a majority of those behind bars. Black men, in particular, form a majority of the four million ex-prisoners denied the right to vote.

This alone is a great injustice that not only robs individuals of their legal rights to vote and sit on juries, but deliberately undermines the role of Black communities in the official political process.

Florida developed a "felons list" to purge people from the state's voter rolls. And they were so eager to knock people off that they adopted outrageous rules that eliminated the voting rights of many people who had not ever been convicted of anything. Their list included names of out-of-state felons from across the country, and it has been revealed that Florida state officials removed people from the voter lists if their names were even *close* to the name of a felon anywhere in the country. So if an ex-con in Illinois was named John Michaels, the Florida officials could knock off Florida voter John, Johnny, Jonathan or Jon R. Michaels, or even J.R. Michaelson. They did not cross-check their list with birthdates or social security numbers but they were *very* careful to match for race. A Black felon named Mr. Green would only knock



Al Gore gaveling down members of the Congressional Black Caucus as they object to the Florida electoral vote, January 6, 2001.

off a Black Mr. Green, but not a single white Mr. Green.

Roughly 54 percent of those on the list were Black, while Black people make up just about 15 percent of Florida's statewide population.

Investigative reporter Greg Palast has examined the list of 94,000 names and found that *only 3 percent* of the names on the list could actually be verified as felons. In fact, there were hundreds of names on the list who were obviously listed in error since their conviction dates were *in the future!*

Many of the tens of thousands of people incorrectly purged in 2000 have been unable to get their right to vote restored. For example, Willie Steen, an African American Gulf War veteran, had his right to vote taken away because his name was similar to William O'Steen, who had been convicted of a felony. Although Florida admits that Steen is innocent, they will not reinstate him to the voter rolls. Those who have had their names removed from the voter rolls were given a truly surreal choice: they had to ask for clemency from Jeb Bush for crimes they *didn't* commit, were never convicted of, and were never even charged with, or else they had to go through elaborate court proceedings to prove that they are themselves and not a "felon" with a similar name.

The Stealing of the 2000 Election

These operations kicked up to another level when it became clear that the whole

2000 election might hang on who won in Florida.

Nationally, Vice President Al Gore got more votes than Bush—but the U.S. Constitution says that the popular vote does not decide the outcome of the election. (This continuing outrage is itself rooted in the compromises over slavery made by the so-called Founding Fathers in the original Constitutional Convention—Southern slave states were given extra electoral votes by counting their African slaves—who had no say and no legal rights—as 3/5 of a human being when the electoral college met.)

It was clear that the 2000 electoral college decision would go to whoever won the state of Florida. There were millions of votes cast in Florida. The counts for Gore and Bush were only separated by a few hundred votes.

That's when all the stuff about "hanging chads" and "pregnant chads" came up. In all the scrutiny that followed, it became clear how many votes in Florida were routinely thrown out and *not* counted. And it became clear how many of those discarded votes were concentrated in Black areas.

In Florida overall, 179,855 votes were not counted—clearly enough to decide the election many times over. These were usually rejected either because there was an "undervote" (because the punch made in the paper was considered not decisive) or because there was an "over-vote" (a ballot with extra markings).

According to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, 54 percent of these uncounted votes were cast by Black people. The like-

lyhood might be completed, a group of hardcore Republican operatives—aides to rightwing Republican congresspeople—stormed into the elections office and staged the now notorious "Brooks Brothers Riot"—banging on the walls, shouting "stop the count," and actually intimidated election officials out of counting the ballots.

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What stands out, by contrast, is that Gore and the Democrats were very UN-willing to mobilize any forces—especially Black people—in the streets to oppose the stealing of this election. When a majority of the Supreme Court voted to hand the election to Bush *without a recount*, Gore bowed before this unprecedented judicial coup d'état.

In the film *Fahrenheit 9/11*, there is a deeply disturbing scene in early January 2001, where members of the Black congressional caucus tried to challenge the 2000 election and protest the widespread disenfranchisement of Black voters in Florida. To get on the floor to challenge the election, they needed the support of at least *one* senator. Not one senator (including not John Kerry or John Edwards) would speak up for the basic legal rights of Black people in this election. And as if that isn't outrageous enough, the film then shows Vice President Al Gore, presiding over the houses of Congress, personally and directly *gaveling down one Black congressperson after another*. Al Gore would not join in their outrage and protest in any way, even though an honest count of those votes would have given him and the Democratic

Continued on page 15

From Dictatorship and Democracy, And Part 6: A World We Would

by Bob Avakian

Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from the edited text of a recent talk by Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA. This talk was given to a group of supporters of the RCP who are studying the historical experience of socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and preparing to take up the challenge of popularizing this experience and engaging in discussion and debate with others about it, particularly on campuses but also more broadly.

The entire talk is online at rwor.org. Footnotes and subheads have been added to this excerpt.

One of the things that I also quoted in this polemic against K. Venu* was a statement by Mao in the course of the Cultural Revolution. In the city of Shanghai, which was a stronghold of the Cultural Revolution, there was a mass uprising of more than a million people. Different factions or groups among the Red Guards united to overthrow the existing municipal committee that ran the city—which was following the revisionist line in all the different fields and was a powerful force within the overall government and Communist Party. Education was to train a new elite, healthy care was for a small elite, not for the masses.

So they had this mass upheaval in Shanghai, and in the initial stages, after they overthrew the old ruling committee in the city, they established for a brief time what was called the Shanghai Commune. This was modeled after the Paris Commune, which in 1871 arose and briefly held power for about two months in the city of Paris, the capital of France, and then was drowned in blood by the counter-revolution. Marx had written about this, summing up some of the important lessons of the Paris Commune, emphasizing that this is what the dictatorship of the proletariat looks like in reality. And one of the things they did in the Paris Commune was that all officials were elected by direct popular vote, and could be recalled by direct expression of the masses in a popular referendum. And so they implemented policies of this kind in the Shanghai Commune, modeling themselves after the Paris Commune.

But, after observing and studying this for a short period of time, Mao came forward with a statement that, under the circumstances, the Shanghai Commune was not the appropriate form in which to exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat. And he made criticisms of this form in his typically “Maoesque” way. He said: “I’m afraid that this commune form is not strong enough to suppress counter-revolutionaries.” I’ll come back to that in a minute. And he also said, “What are we going to do about international relations—what about all the ministers we have that are like the foreign minister who is going to appoint the foreign minister?”

The Lessons of the Revolutionary Committees

And when Mao said that this commune form is not strong enough to suppress counter-revolutionaries, what he was saying was: We are in the early stages of socialism, and not only do we have all the imperialists and reactionary states surrounding us, but within our society, we still have all these inequalities that are left over from the old society. We’re far from having overcome all these inequalities. If you have everybody taking part in these elections, directly choosing all the political representatives in that way, then bourgeois forces are going to come to dominate these elections, and we’re going to get representatives of the bourgeoisie elected.

Why? Because the people are stupid and not capable of managing their own affairs? No. Because people who ruled in the old society and people they link up who want to go back to the old society have tremendous advantages over the masses of people because of the inequalities that existed for centuries that the revolution was only beginning to address and overcome.

For example, the mental/manual contradiction that I talked about earlier**—the contradiction between the small number of people who do intellectual work, shall we say, and the great mass of people who do

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* "Democracy: More Than Ever We Can and Must Do Better Than That," in *Phony Communism Is Dead...Long Live Real Communism!*, (second edition), by Bob Avakian. (Chicago: RCP Publications, 2004).

As the world exists today and as people seek to change it, and particularly in terms of the socialist transformation of society, as I see it there are basically three alternatives that are possible.

One is the world as it is. Enough said about that.

The second one is in a certain sense, almost literally and mechanically, turning the world upside down. In other words, people who are now exploited will no longer be exploited in the same way, people who now rule this society will be prevented from ruling or influencing society in a significant way. The basic

what was called the Shanghai Commune. This was modeled after the Paris Commune, which in 1871 arose and briefly held power for about two months in the city of Paris, the capital of France, and then was drowned in blood by the counter-revolution. Marx had written about this, summing up some of the important lessons of the Paris Commune, emphasizing that this is what the dictatorship of the proletariat looks like in reality. And one of the things they did in the Paris Commune was that all officials were elected by direct popular vote, and could be recalled by direct expression of the masses in a popular referendum. And so they implemented policies of this kind in the Shanghai Commune, modeling themselves after the Paris Commune.

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Really, in a kind of provocative humorous way, he was saying: Look, we live in a world that has all these imperialist countries out there. He wasn't really talking about Chinese officials, like the foreign minister, and who was going to recognize them, he was saying all these imperialist vultures out there are going to take advantage of us if we don't have a strong enough centralized force to be able to resist them and withstand attacks by them.

Revolutionary Communism

And when Mao said that this commune form is not strong enough to suppress counter-revolutionaries, what he was saying was: We are in the early stages of socialism, and not only do we have all the imperialists and reactionary states surrounding us, but within our society, we still have all these inequalities that are left over from the old society. We're far from having overcome all these inequalities. If you have everybody taking part in these elections, directly choosing all the political representatives in that way, then bourgeois forces are going to come to dominate these elections, and we're going to get representatives of the bourgeoisie elected.

Why? Because the people are stupid and not capable of managing their own affairs? No. Because people who ruled in the old society and people they link up who want to go back to the old society have tremendous advantages over the masses of people because of the inequalities that existed for centuries that the revolution was only beginning to address and overcome.

For example, the mental/manual contradiction that I talked about earlier**—the contradiction between the small number of people who do intellectual work, shall we say, and the great mass of people who do manual labor. This cannot be overcome all at once. Not only is it a question of what's left over from the old society, but there is also a question of where are you at in the process of building the new society and transforming it. Because, in order for everybody to be able to engage in all these different spheres of society, you have to be able to produce the material requirements of life with a small amount of the total labor that would go into all the activity in society. If it still takes you a large part of the working day of most of the people in the society to produce the things that can meet the material requirements of society and provide enough to defend that society in a world dominated by imperialism, and to have something laid away for insurance against natural disasters and things like that—if it still takes you a large part of the laboring hours of people in the society as whole to produce those things, then you will inevitably have inequalities between different parts of your society, because you are not going to be able to free up everybody to spend the time that is necessary to go into these different realms and really learn to immerse themselves in these spheres and begin to master them.

In socialist China they were only beginning to break down these inequalities. When I went to China I talked to peasants who were reading Engels' *Anti-Dühring*.

ries, which basically chained the workers to their machines and made them once again just cogs in the machinery of producing wealth. All this was ultimately going to be producing a new capitalist system with party members presiding over it.

* "Democracy: More Than Ever We Can and Must Do Better Than That," in *Phony Communism Is Dead...Long Live Real Communism!*, (second edition), by Bob Avakian. (Chicago: RCP Publications, 2004).

the ministers that would be appointed in this way." Really, in a kind of provocative humorous way, he was saying: Look, we live in a world that has all these imperialist countries out there. He wasn't really talking about Chinese officials, like the foreign minister, and who was going to recognize them, he was saying all these imperialist vultures out there are going to take advantage of us if we don't have a strong enough centralized force to be able to resist them and withstand attacks by them.

As the world exists today and as people seek to change it, and particularly in terms of the socialist transformation of society, as I see it there are basically three alternatives that are possible.

One is the world as it is. Enough said about that.

The second one is in a certain sense, almost literally and mechanically, turning the world upside down. In other words, people who are now exploited will no longer be exploited in the same way, people who now rule this society will be prevented from ruling or influencing society in a significant way. The basic economic structure of society will change, some of the social relations will change, and some of the forms of political rule will change, and some of the forms of culture and ideology will change, but fundamentally the masses of people will not be increasingly and in one leap after another, drawn into the process of really transforming society.

The third alternative is a real radical rupture in every sphere, a radically different synthesis, to put it that way. Or to put it another way, it's a society and a world that the great majority of people would actually want to live in. One in which not only do they not have to worry about where their next meal is coming from, or if they get sick whether they're going to be told that they can't have health care because they can't pay for it, as important as that is; but one in which they are actually taking up, wrangling with, and increasingly making their own province all the different spheres of society.

Not only is it a question of what's left over from the old society, but there is also a question of where are you at in the process of building the new society and transforming it. Because, in order for everybody to be able to engage in all these different spheres of society, you have to be able to produce the material requirements of life with a small amount of the total labor that would go into all the activity in society. If it still takes you a large part of the working day of most of the people in the society to produce the things that can meet the material requirements of society and provide enough to defend that society in a world dominated by imperialism, and to have something laid away for insurance against natural disasters and things like that—if it still takes you a large part of the laboring hours of people in the society as whole to produce those things, then you will inevitably have inequalities between different parts of your society, because you are not going to be able to free up everybody to spend the time that is necessary to go into these different realms and really learn to immerse themselves in these spheres and begin to master them.

In socialist China they were only beginning to break down these inequalities. When I went to China I talked to peasants who were reading Engels' *Anti-Dühring*, which is a very complex philosophical work—well it actually talks about politics and economics too, but it's very complex. They were reading Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*, which is a long and complex philosophical essay and polemic. But they were not reading it with the same facility as the intellectuals were able to read it. That's just a fact. Because the peasants, in their masses, had not developed the facility to engage in this realm and wrangle with it in the same way as the intellectuals were able to do this. So they were beginning to overcome this, but they were a long way from fully overcoming it.

What Mao was saying is this: If you just have direct elections and direct recall of all officials, what you're going to have is a situation where people who have more facility with ideas and can articulate things better will come to dominate this process, or else you'll have people who don't know enough to actually deal in the realms that have to be dealt with to keep society going and keep the revolution going forward, and

** See Part 1 of this series, "The Struggle in the Realm of Ideas," in *RW* #1250, August 22, 2004.

the Socialist Transition to Communism Want to Live In





Shanghai, China, 1967. Revolutionary proletarians distributing leaflets in the streets during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

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Instead, Mao proposed and popularized a form that had been developed in another part of China, a place called Heilongjiang province, in the northeast of China, where, through the Cultural Revolution, they brought forward what were called revolutionary committees, which combined representatives of the masses with representatives of workers and parties

but they provided limousines [laughter] for the capitalists. So that shows you where they'd gone and where they were yet to go. There were certain things that they would not do, but there were certain things they couldn't help doing. And that was a reflection of where they were at, and where the world struggle was at.

So, as much as it sounds "undemocratic" Mao was

experience of masses rising up, literally in their tens of millions, and hundreds of millions, all over the country.

Three Alternative Worlds

As the world exists today and as people seek to



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Instead, Mao proposed and popularized a form that had been developed in another part of China, a place called Heilongjiang province, in the northeast of China, where, through the Cultural Revolution, they brought forward what were called revolutionary committees, which combined representatives of the masses with representatives of experts and party members in various forms to actually be the administrative body in all the different institutions: the educational system, the factories, the health care system, and so on.

This, Mao said, more corresponds to where we are in the process of transforming society. This is something that we can actually implement which will keep power in the hands of the masses of people and will actually help to develop the struggle to transform these unequal relations but doesn't overstep where we're at in that process and thereby open the door to a small handful once again dominating the whole process.

Of course, there are many people (even some so-called "communists," such as the Progressive Labor Party) who just jumped up and down denouncing Mao for this and declaring that he wanted to institute once again the rule of oppressors instead of letting the people themselves run the society. But Mao was absolutely correct. He was saying: We have to have things like foreign ministries in a socialist country at this point because we have to deal with the outside world. If we don't, if we're infantile and we don't try to deal with the outside world and maneuver in the face of all these contradictions, we're just going to allow the enemies to unite against us more powerfully.

They had trade delegations come from capitalist countries, which they needed to do. And they had to provide limousines. Now they didn't provide whores,

but they provided limousines [laughter] for the capitalists. So that shows you where they'd gone and where they were yet to go. There were certain things that they would not do, but there were certain things they couldn't help doing. And that was a reflection of where they were at, and where the world struggle was at.

So, as much as it sounds "undemocratic" Mao was profoundly correct—what he was arguing for was based on a recognition that the forms that we develop to give expression to the rule of the masses of people and to the revolutionary transformation of society by the masses of people have to correspond in a fundamental sense to where we are in the process of transforming the economic base and all the social, political, and ideological institutions and structures of society, and where we are in the process of the world revolution overall. If we overstep that, then we're going to get thrown back—back into the horror of the old society. You can end up in that place by directly going off the road of socialism, but you can also end up in that place by trying to overstep what the actual conditions allow you to do. Rather than making a leap that corresponded to the advances they'd made in transforming the relations among people and the thinking of people—which is what these revolutionary committees represented—if, instead, you try to make a leap beyond that to something that doesn't correspond to where you are within that society and where you are in relation to the rest of the world, then you're laying the basis for the whole thing to be undone and destroyed.

There are some very profound lessons that have to be drawn out of this and have to be popularized. Not just the particular policy—what's more important is the outlook and method with which Mao approached this, and with which he sifted through, studied, and drew the appropriate lessons out of this tremendous

experience of masses rising up, literally in their tens of millions, and hundreds of millions, all over the country.

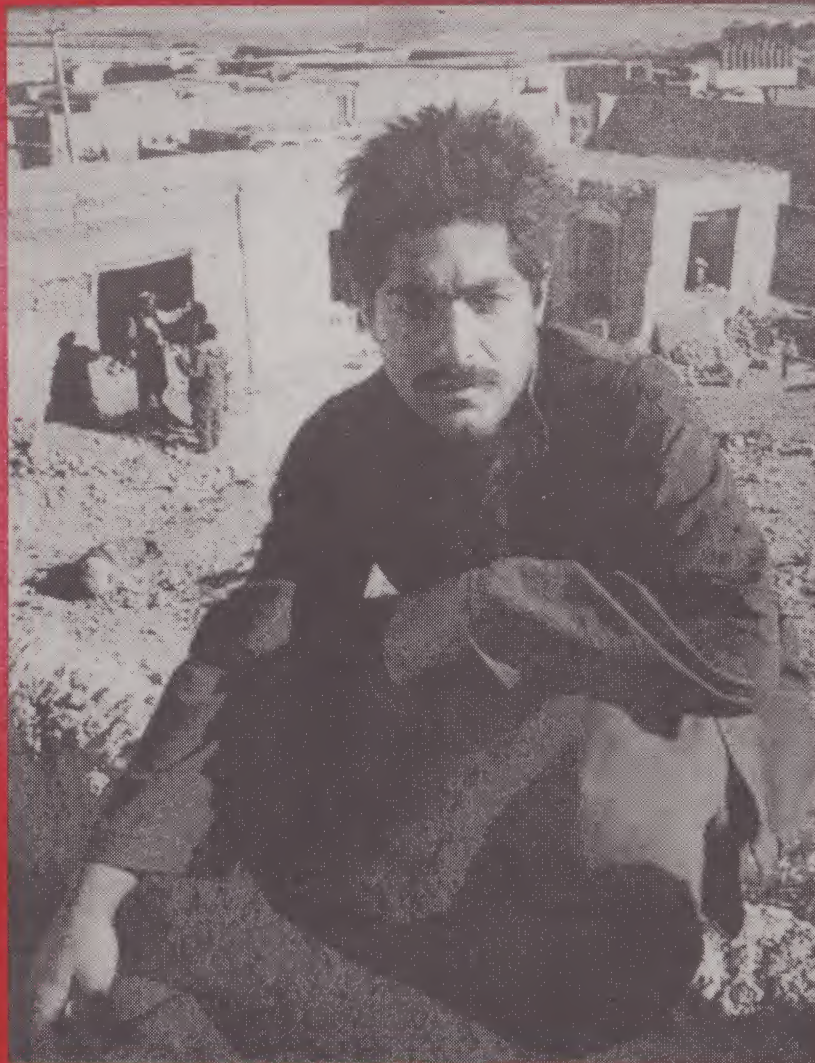
Three Alternative Worlds

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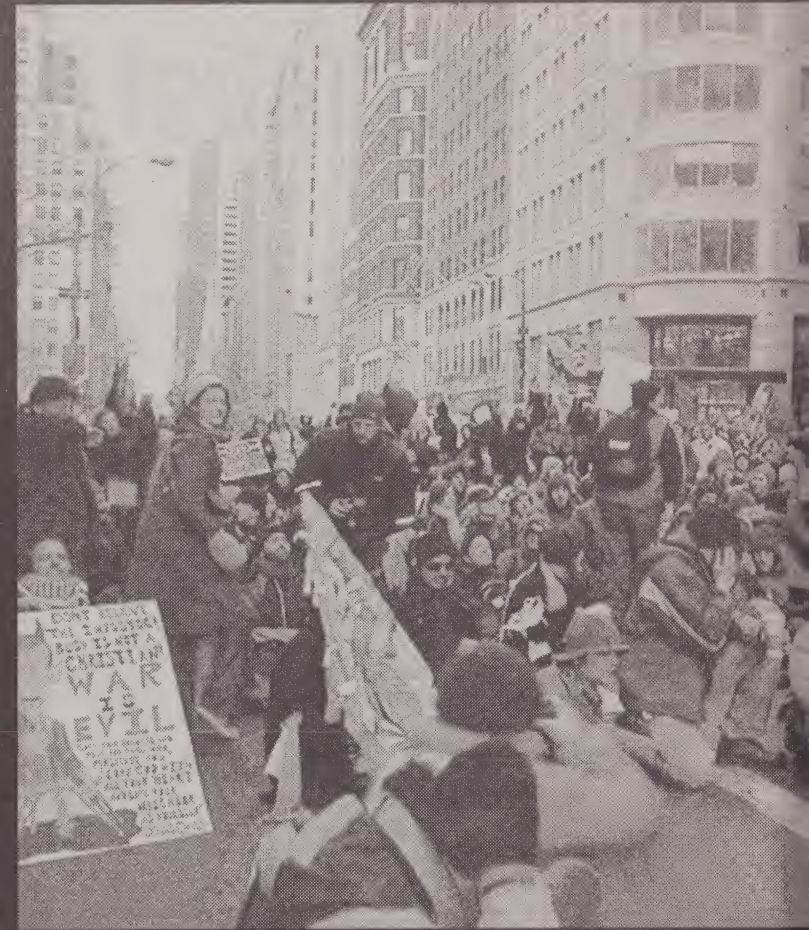
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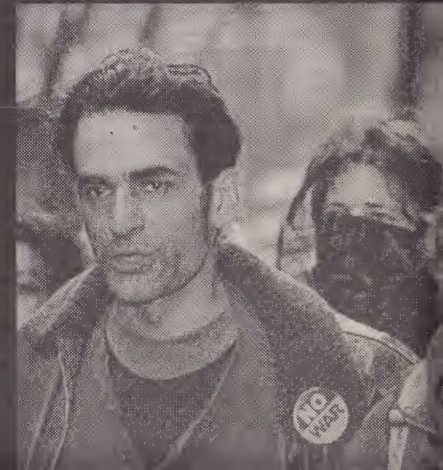
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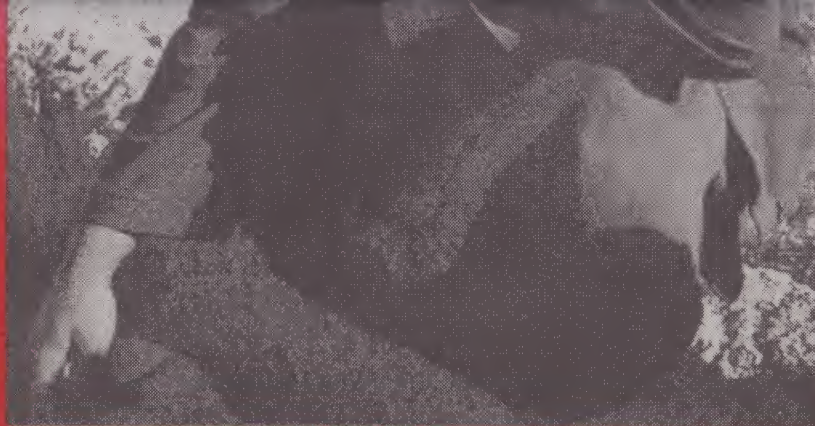


Muhammad Ismail on the wall of his house where his wife and son were killed during the U.S. bombing, Kandahar, Afghanistan, December 2001.



Protesters block 5th Avenue, New York City, February 2003.

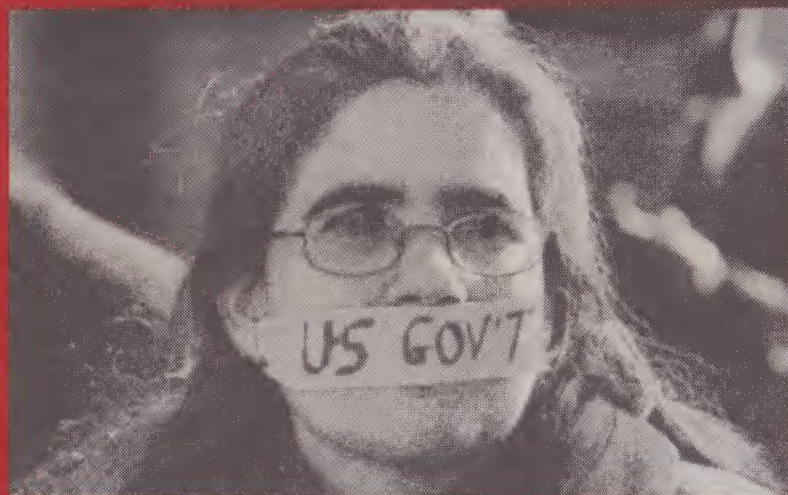




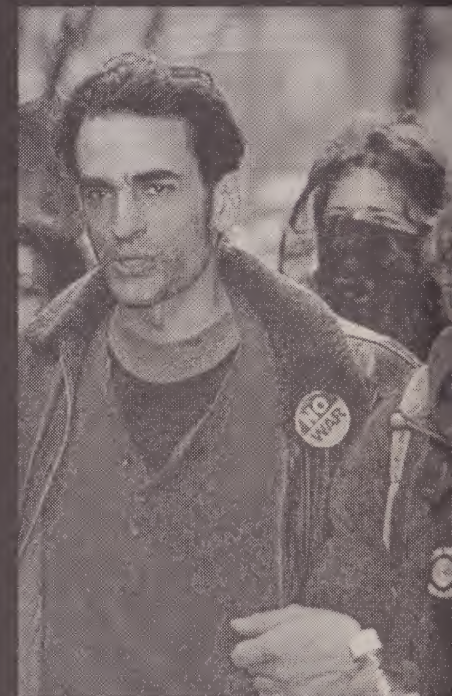
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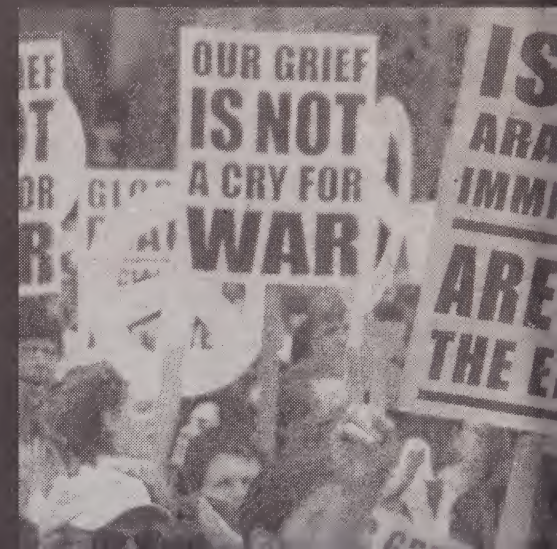
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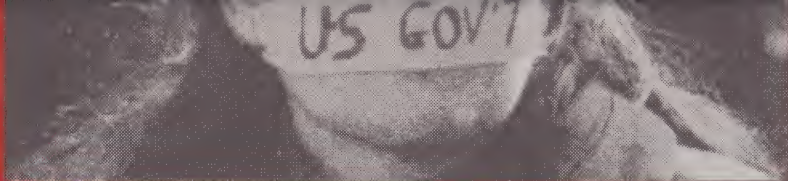


Iraqi prisoner being tortured by U.S. troops at Abu Ghraib prison.



New York City, March 2003.





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Iraqi kids vs. U.S. troops, Falluja, November 2003.



New York City, October 2001.



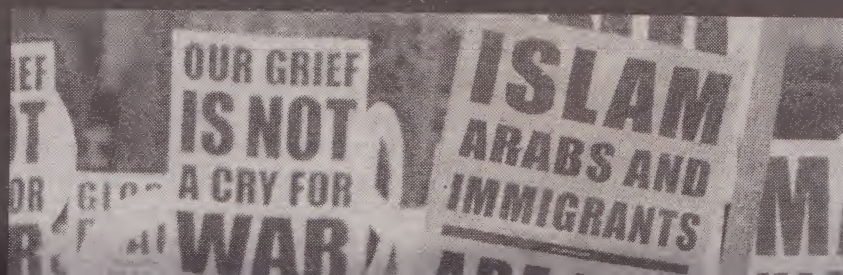
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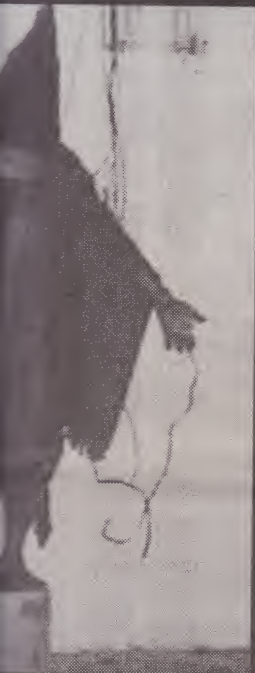
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New York City, March 2003.



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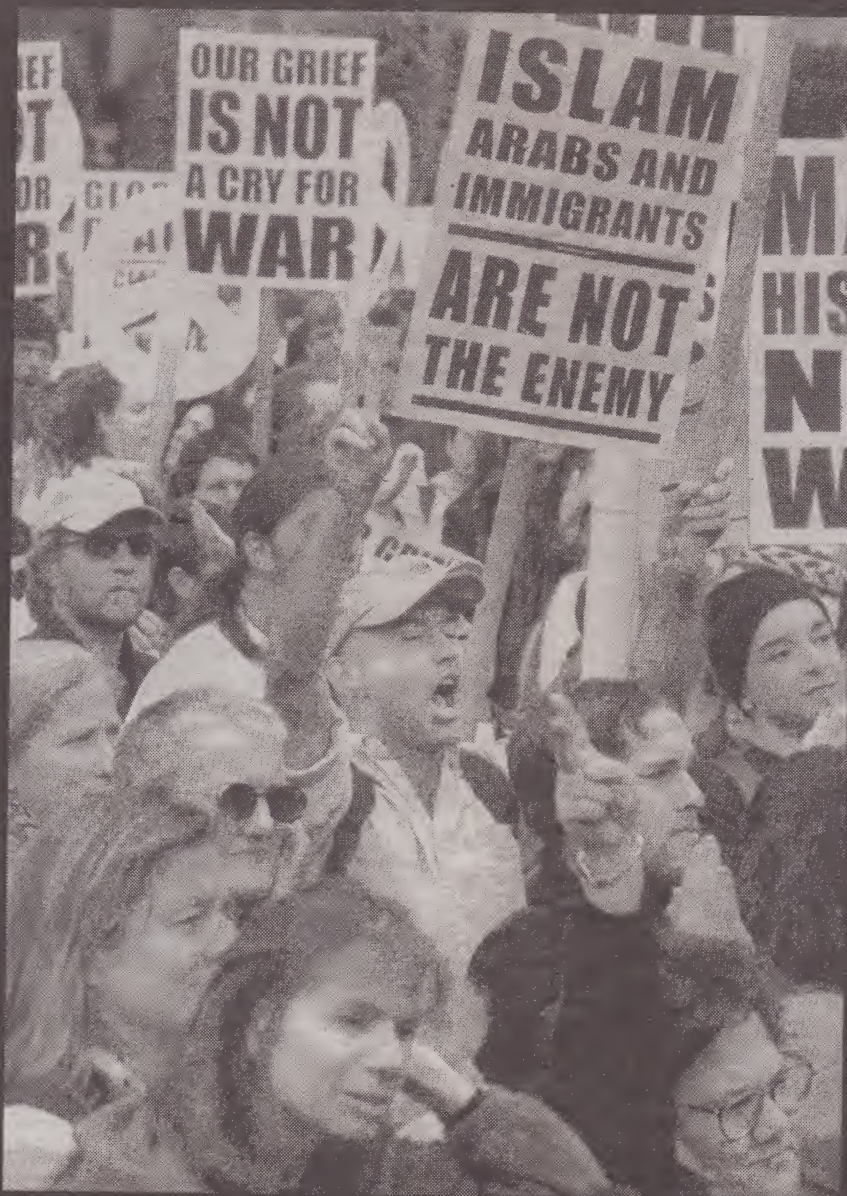
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Photo: IMC

New York City, March 2003.

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New York City, October 2001.

**The Will
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Burning mock draft cards, New York C



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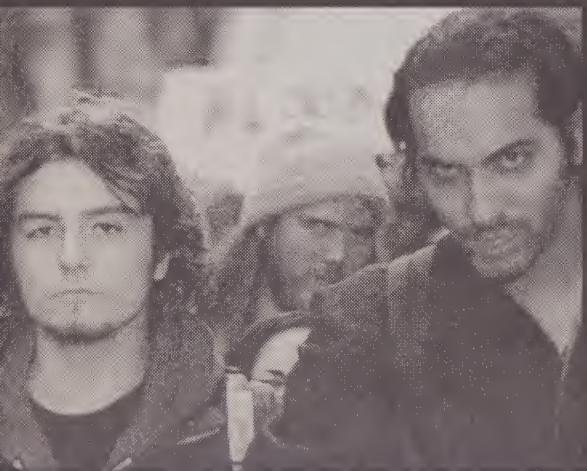


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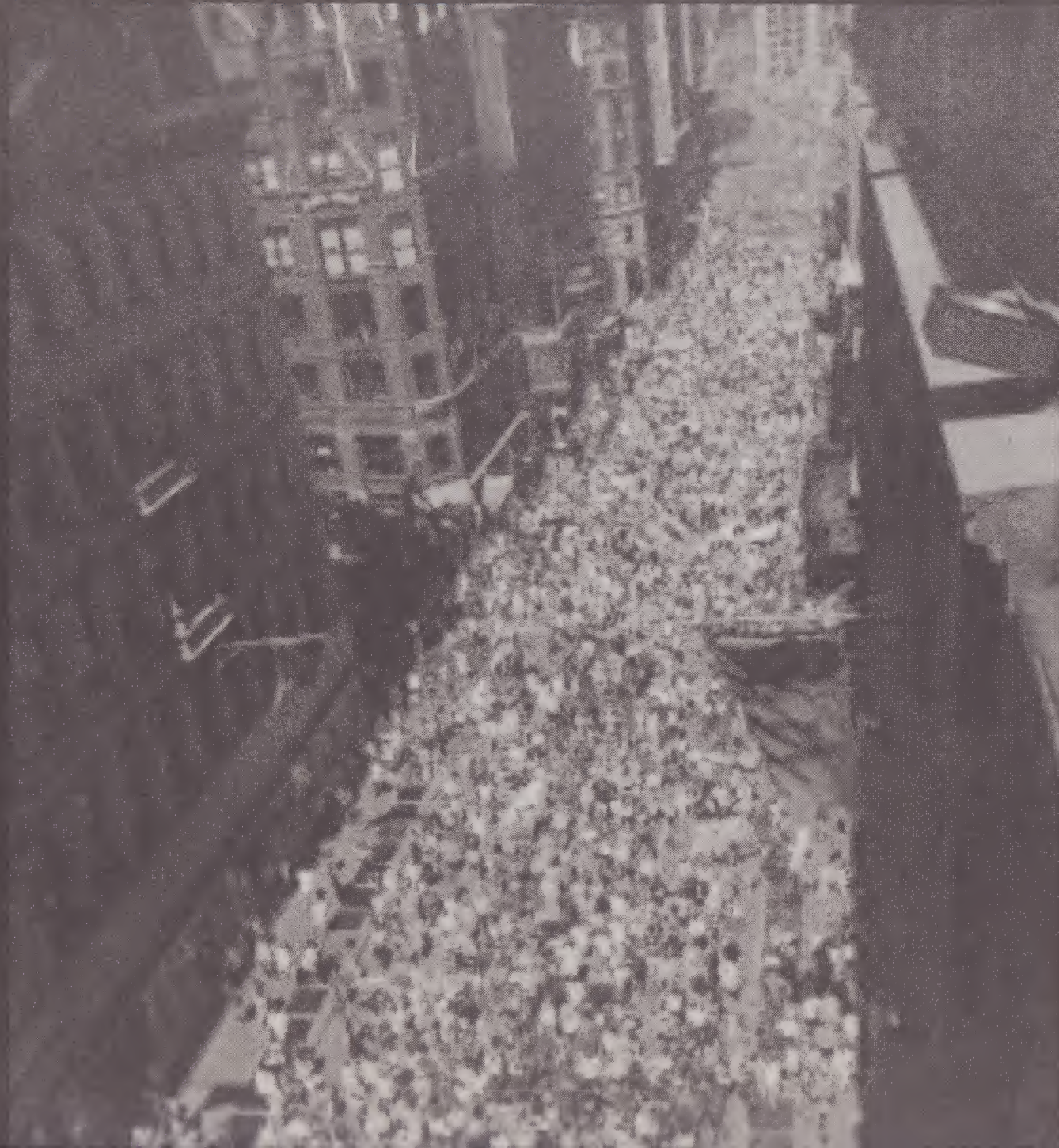
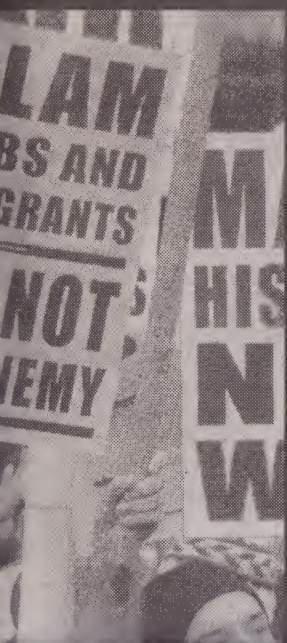




Photo: IMC



More than half a million people march in New York City to say "No" to the Bush agenda, August 29, 2003.



The Will of the People Will Not Be Expressed in This Election



Photo: Clear Vision Photography



Photo: Fred Askew

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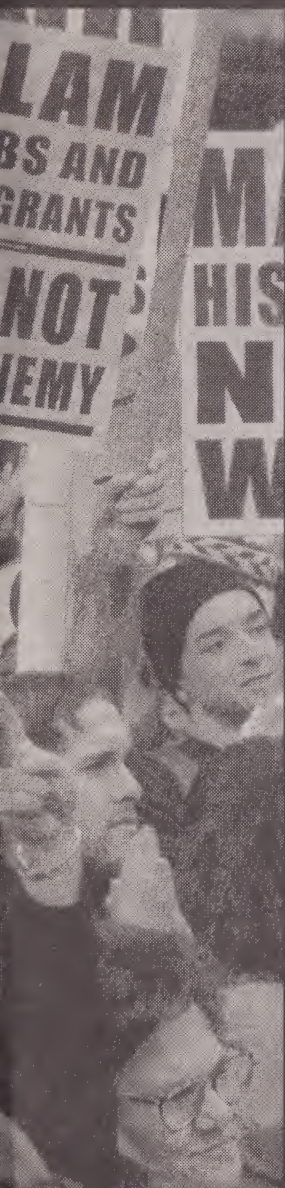


Photo: Clear Vision Photography

Burning mock draft cards, New York City, November 2002.

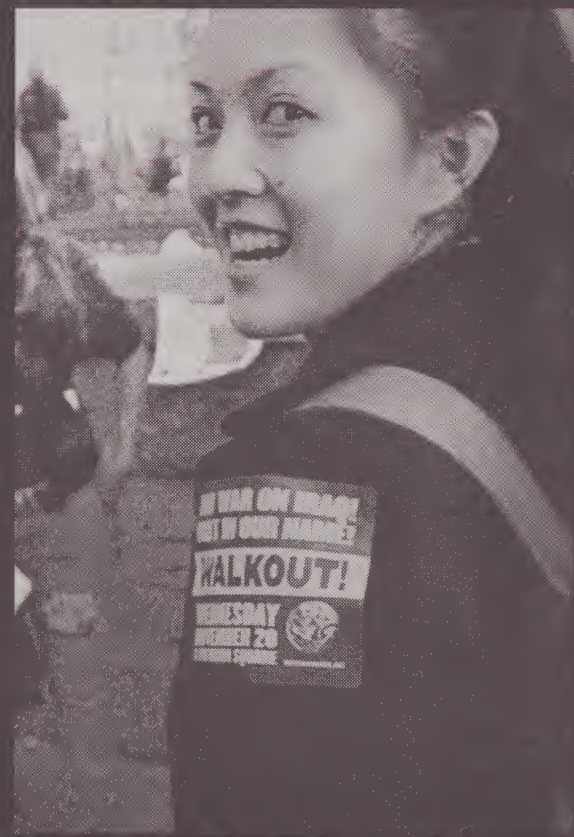


Photo: Fred Askew

New York City, November 2002.

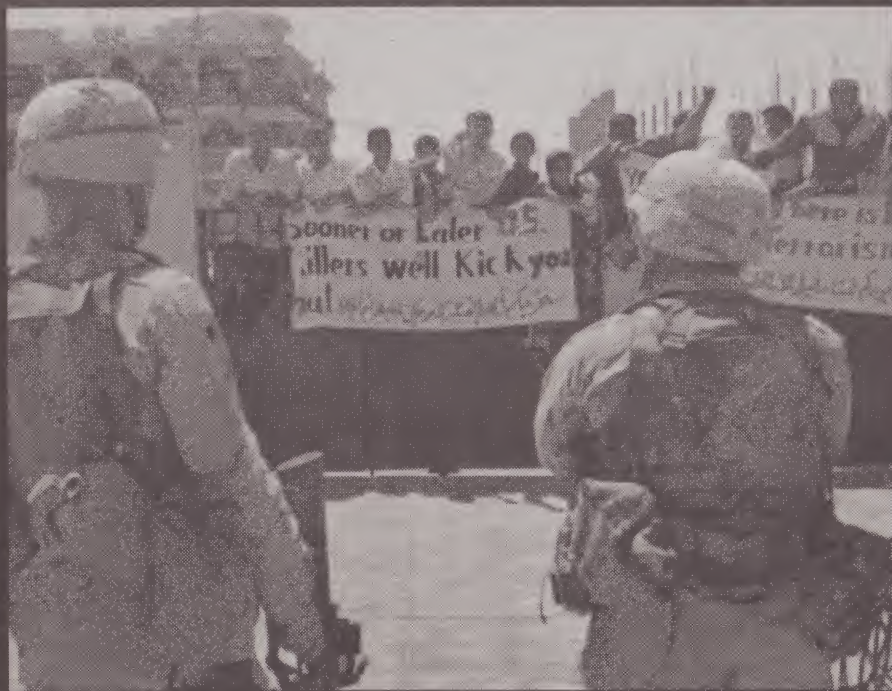
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***Will of the People Will Not
Expressed in This Election***

THE IRAQ QUAGMIRE AND RESISTANCE IN THE U.S. MILITARY



Protesters in Falluja, Iraq, confront U.S. troops, April 2003

Bob Avakian speaks to the question of "support the troops" in his talk "Elections, Democracy and Dictatorship, Resistance and Revolution" (the talk is available online at bobavakian.net).

A recent incident involving a refusal by a U.S. Army unit to follow orders is a sign of big problems for the U.S. military in Iraq.

Eighteen soldiers from the 343rd Quartermaster platoon refused an order to deliver fuel from a base in southern Iraq to Taji, north of Baghdad. These troops had just returned from a 10-hour mission to deliver jet fuel to another army base. But the fuel was rejected because it was contaminated. After driving back to the base in southern Iraq, these soldiers were ordered to take the same contaminated fuel 220 miles to Taji. The group told their commanding officers that their vehicles were unsafe for the trip. But they were ordered to head out the next morning anyway.

The straw that broke the camel's back was when the troops learned that they would not be receiving military backup for this very dangerous trip. At this point, according to reports in the mainstream press, the group refused. The troops are now facing different degrees of disciplinary action.

According some family members, the 18 soldiers acted because they felt they were being sent out on a "suicide mission." While this refusal was apparently not based on conscious objection to the war, the bourgeois media worried about what the incident reveals about overall morale within the military, given the increasing resistance to U.S. occupation. One military officer quoted in *Newsweek* said, "What everyone wonders, of course, is whether this is an isolated incident or the pebble which starts the avalanche."

At the same time, this incident is being used to push the argument that what is needed is *more* money, *more* military hardware, and *more* troops for the U.S. war in Iraq. This is mainly put forward by bourgeois politicians, but other forces also get caught up in this argument—including many military families, who have become increasingly outspoken. This is part of the view that says that even if you oppose the war, you must "support the troops." But people who put forward this argument have to ask themselves—what about the crimes that these troops are carrying out against the

refused to give them any of our fuel on the base, and told them they had to use the Iraqi fuel station down the highway. That was not very appealing to the drivers since the insurgents did not just attack the troops, they went after anyone who was working for us. So the drivers asked if they could stay on the base till morning, and the staff sergeant said, 'No.' So as we sat there and watched them leave the base, unarmed, unescorted, with fear and dread written all over their faces, I could only think that if this is the way America does business with others, no wonder they want to put bombs on the side of the road for us.

"This went on for eight months while I was in Iraq, and going through it told me that we were not there for their freedom, we were not there for WMD. We had no idea what we were fighting for anymore."

Another letter in Moore's book raises serious questions about the U.S. role in Iraq: "Where are the WMD's? Why are we really over in Iraq? Why the hell are our troops dying? Mr. Bush, how are we safer now than we were before you stole office? There are a lot of people I saw when I was deployed in the desert whose spirits were down, and a lot wondered why the heck we were even in Iraq. You don't know friend from foe, and a country that DID NOT have any terrorist training camps is now thriving with them. Iraq will never be stable, another Vietnam in the making. Hope you are proud of that one, Mr. Bush, because I know I am not..."

In an interview with the Chicago Revolutionary Writers and Artist Collective, a GI who was home on leave said: "This is what is called a dog-and-pony show. The reason we are there is to show the power of the United States, not necessarily to liberate Iraq. We are definitely not there for weapons of mass destruction. It is mass destruction when we drop 3,000-pound bombs destroying entire cities... I think we are there to show that this is the power of the US. Bush has us there to show us off. Our job is to show that we're the big dogs. It sucks; I do not know why we're there. We will never win. You cannot conquer a people."

Such quotes from GIs illustrate the con-



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Bob Avakian speaks to the question of "support the troops" in his talk "Elections, Democracy and Dictatorship, Resistance and Revolution" (the talk is available online at bobavakian.net):

"The slogan has often been raised 'support the troops, not the war.' What about this? To give an extreme example and pose very sharply what is wrong with this, what if we were to raise a slogan in the context of a rape, 'support the rapist not the rape.' Whether you support someone or don't support them depends on the content of what they are doing. As long as they are a part of the U.S. armed forces and acting as the instrument of the system that that armed force is the expression of, they cannot be supported in that context and in that way. We can encourage them and should encourage them to resist and to rebel, to act out of conscience in refusing to carry out crimes against humanity, and we should build massive support whenever and wherever soldiers do that. And we should popularize examples from the Vietnam War and similar situations where that has been done. But you cannot 'support the troops' without supporting what it is that they are doing right now. Just as you cannot 'support a rapist' without supporting the rape—which is exactly what these armed forces of the U.S. are carrying out metaphorically as well as literally right now."



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BIG QUESTIONS AMONG THE TROOPS

The U.S. quagmire in Iraq is raising big questions among many occupying U.S. troops. Whole sections of the military are questioning what the invasion of Iraq has to do with "fighting terrorism." Troops have expressed anger at the huge profits being made by private U.S. companies and the big salaries being paid to private security and military forces in Iraq.

One of the most stinging indictments of this war has been the exposure of the lies about the "weapons of mass destruction"—the main reason Bush gave for invading Iraq. This has led to undermining the convictions and morale of large sections of U.S. troops. Some U.S. soldiers have openly refused to be part of the empire-building atrocities of the U.S. in Iraq. Meanwhile, many others are increasingly questioning the mission and why they are there.

Add to this the intensifying resistance to the occupation by different forces in Iraq. Major groups like Falluja came out of U.S.

serious questions about the U.S. role in Iraq: "Where are the WMD's? Why are we really over in Iraq? Why the hell are our troops dying? Mr. Bush, how are we safer now than we were before you stole office? There are a lot of people I saw when I was deployed in the desert whose spirits were down, and a lot wondered why the heck we were even in Iraq. You don't know friend from foe, and a country that DID NOT have any terrorist training camps is now thriving with them. Iraq will never be stable, another Vietnam in the making. Hope you are proud of that one, Mr. Bush, because I know I am not..."

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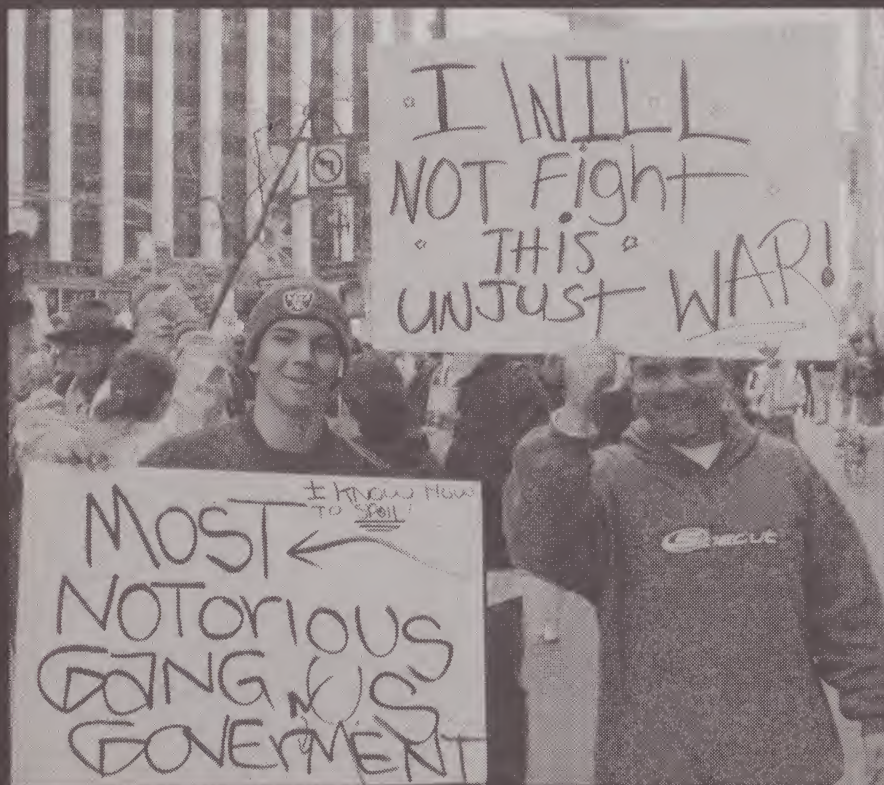
Such quotes from GIs illustrate the contradictory sentiments and potential fissures within the U.S. military. There is much resentment of the Bush administration for the lies and manipulation surrounding the war in Iraq. At the same time, much of the sentiment, at this point, is put within the context of "supporting the troops" and concern about the safety of the troops—rather than seeing the whole role this imperialist military is playing in the process of building up the U.S. empire, what this means for the Iraqi people, and on this basis refusing to be a part of it.

SUPPORTING THE TROOPS WHO RESIST

There have been some U.S. soldiers who have expressed conscious opposition to the war-like Stephen Funk and Camilo Mejia, who did time in jail for their refusal to be part of this imperialist war. Or those like Brandon Huey and Jeremy Hinzman who escaped to Canada. They have all spoken out or continue to speak out against the war.

Then there is Marine Staff Sergeant Jimmy Massey who, after 12 years on active duty, told his superiors, "Thank you sergeant major, I don't want your money anymore. I don't want your benefits. You

"The slogan has often been raised 'support the troops, not the war.' What about this? To give an extreme example and pose very sharply what is wrong with this, what if we were to raise a slogan in the context of a rape, 'support the rapist not the rape.' Whether you support someone or don't support them depends on the content of what they are doing. As long as they are a part of the U.S. armed forces and acting as the instrument of the system that that armed force is the expression of, they cannot be supported in that context and in that way. We can encourage them and should encourage them to resist and to rebel, to act out of conscience in refusing to carry out crimes against humanity, and we should build massive support whenever and wherever soldiers do that. And we should popularize examples from the Vietnam War and similar situations where that has been done. But you cannot 'support the troops' without supporting what it is that they are doing right now. Just as you cannot 'support a rapist' without supporting the rape—which is exactly what these armed forces of the U.S. are carrying out metaphorically as well as literally right now."



San Francisco, February 2003.

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Add to this the intensifying resistance to the occupation by different forces in Iraq. Major areas like Falluja remain out of U.S. control. Other areas like Samara, Ramadi and Baghdad are hotbeds of anti-U.S. sentiment and scenes of regular attacks on U.S. forces. The *New York Times* reported that in a recent 30-day period there were 2,368 recorded attacks by resistance forces—an average of nearly 80 attacks per day. The promise of a quick, easy victory has evaporated. At the same time, the U.S. military's "stop loss" policy has prevented soldiers who have served their time from returning home.

WHAT GI'S ARE SAYING

Michael Moore's latest book, *Will They Ever Trust Us Again?*, gives a sense of the complex frustration of U.S. troops. This book contains letters written to him by U.S. troops, mainly after the release of his film *Fahrenheit 9/11*.

One letter tells of treatment of Iraqi workers: "...I was on the Iraqi escort detail again. We had received a bunch of housing units for the base that day and the Iraqis finished up for the day at sunset. The problem here was that the truck drivers were contracted out from Jordan, and their trucks were low on fuel. The same staff sergeant

within the U.S. military. There is much resentment of the Bush administration for the lies and manipulation surrounding the war in Iraq. At the same time, much of the sentiment, at this point, is put within the context of "supporting the troops" and concern about the safety of the troops—rather than seeing the whole role this imperialist military is playing in the process of building up the U.S. empire, what this means for the Iraqi people, and on this basis refusing to be a part of it.

SUPPORTING THE TROOPS WHO RESIST

There have been some U.S. soldiers who have expressed conscious opposition to the war-like Stephen Funk and Camilo Mejia, who did time in jail for their refusal to be part of this imperialist war. Or those like Brandon Huey and Jeremy Hinzman who escaped to Canada. They have all spoken out or continue to speak out against the war.

Then there is Marine Staff Sergeant Jimmy Massey who, after 12 years on active duty, told his superiors, "Thank you sergeant major, I don't want your money anymore. I don't want your benefits. You killed some civilians, and you're gonna have to live with it partner, and I'm gonna tell the truth." He also said, "I'm not going to kill innocent civilians for no government... I was taught and raised by parents and relatives that there are certain things you don't do, and killing innocent civilians is one of them."

There are a number of other troops, not as well known, who have sought refuge in Canada rather than go to or return to Iraq. Some have chosen jail time rather than go. There are hundreds who are currently AWOL from the military. The Associated Press reported that the Army admits that more than 800 former soldiers with the Individual Ready Reserve have failed to comply with Army orders to get back in uniform and report for duty in Iraq or Afghanistan. This represents more than one-third of the total who were told to report to a mobilization station by Oct. 17.

There is more to be learned about the situation among U.S. troops, and the potential for greater fissures within the U.S. military as the war and resistance develop in Iraq.



Special to the RWOR

Nicholas Heyward Sr. whose son was killed by cops, New York City.



Los Angeles

Photo: Heidi Wernitz

October 22, 2004: 9th Annual National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality

On October 22, people in over 30 cities and towns across the U.S. marched, rallied, and took other action on the 9th Annual National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality, Repression, and the Criminalization of a Generation. The epidemic of police murder continues—more than 100 people have been killed by law enforcement just in the New York/New Jersey area since 9/11. At the same time, the government is ratcheting up police-state measures throughout society, and repression especially against immigrants. In this situation, it was very important and significant that proletarian people, joined by others, took to the streets and in other ways made a clear stand against police brutality and repression.

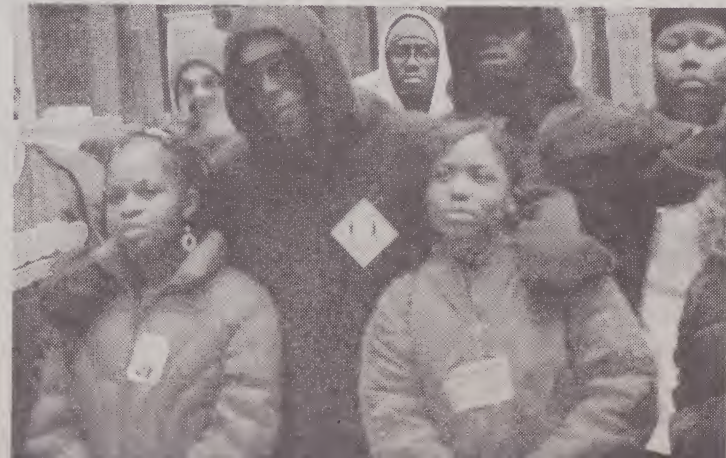
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Right behind them, the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade carried a huge banner that read, “Revolution: Why It’s Necessary, Why It’s Possible, What It’s All About, a Talk by Bob Avakian.”

In front of the Criminal Courts building, the flatbed truck leading the demonstration suddenly stopped. The crowd shouted, spat, and waved their middle fingers in a gesture that could be seen and heard all the way up to the rooftop of that building.

One of the most powerful moments in the march was when one family member after another spoke about their sons and brothers whose lives were stolen by the police. Javier Quezada described the day his son was shot over a dozen times—how, as



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The demonstration of 500 people marched through the sweatshop district in downtown L.A., where proletarians lined the streets waiting for buses, and many waved and shouted out in support of the protesters.

Students from college campuses joined youth from the proletarian neighborhoods of South Central and Pico Union and high school students, who had ditched school to stand with the families who have lost loved ones at the hands of the police.

All along the march people shared stories of being brutalized by the police and losing loved ones. There was discussion about what it's going to take to end police brutality and other injustices that rain down on people. There was a sentiment among people that big things are up and the future of humanity is at stake.

One woman, a mother of three, asked, "What kind of world exists for the children? They cannot even go outside to walk at night and see the stars... They can get pulled over by the cops and that's it... I know there's a better life for all these youth."

Proletarians from Watts opened a window to a new vision of what society could be like in their banner that read, "Imagine... If we ruled the world there would be no more police brutality and murder. Our young people would be treated with respect and

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One of the most powerful moments in the march was when one family member after another spoke about their sons and brothers whose lives were stolen by the police. Javier Quezada described the day his son was shot over a dozen times—how, as Javier Quezada Jr. attempted to cling to the last seconds of his life in a hospital parking lot, the police shot him in the face three times.

The father of Rafael Ramos described how his son was crossing the street with the green light when a patrol car, with no sirens on, ran through a red light and ran over him at 60 mph. The police department mailed him a standard letter of apology for his son's death. With anger and tears welling up in his eyes he took out the letter and ripped it up on the stage.

Joe Veale, L.A. spokesperson for the Revolutionary Communist Party, said that in each and every one of these stories there was another alternative. In many cases, the families and friends pleaded with the police to let them deal with the situation, but every time the police refused. When Joe quoted RCP Chairman Bob Avakian talking about such actions by the police, his words resonated deeply with the people: "If they can't find better ways to deal with these kinds of situations, then they need to get the fuck out of the way. They need to get off the face of the Earth. They need to get out of the way of the people because we can find better ways to deal with these situations."

(Check the October 22 Coalition website at october22.org and the Indymedia websites for reports about other cities.)



Chicago



Greensboro, North Carolina

RW/OR Photo

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Chicago



Greensboro, North Carolina



Los Angeles



Los Angeles

Part 6: A World We Would Want to Live In

Continued from page 7

Well, did they have a point? Yes, up to a point. But fundamentally what they were putting forward, the vision of society that they were projecting, was a social welfare kind of society in which fundamentally the role of the masses of people is no different than it is under the classical form of capitalism. The answer about the rights of the people cannot be reduced to the right to have a job and earn an income, as basic as that is. There is the question of are we really going to transform society so that in every respect, not only economically but socially, politically, ideologically, and culturally, it really is superior to capitalist society. A society that not only meets the needs of the masses of people, but really is characterized increasingly by the conscious expression and initiative of the masses of people.

This is a more fundamental transformation than simply a kind of social welfare, socialist in name but really capitalist in essence society, where the role of the masses of people is still largely reduced to being producers of wealth, but not people who thrash out all the larger questions of affairs of state, the direction of society, culture, philosophy, science, the arts, and so on. The revisionist model is a narrow, economist view of socialism. It reduces the people, in their activity, to simply the economic sphere of society, and in a limited way at that—simply their social welfare with regard to the economy. It doesn't even think about transforming the world outlook of the people as they in turn change the world around them.

And you cannot have a new society and a new world with the same outlook that people are indoctrinated and inculcated with in this society. You cannot have a real revolutionary transformation of society and abolition of unequal social as well as economic relations

With regard to the question of the party, I think two things are definitely true. One, you need a vanguard party to lead this revolution and to lead the new state. Two, that party has to have an ideology that unifies it, an ideology that correctly reflects and enables people to consciously change reality, which is communist ideology.

But, more broadly, should everyone in society have to profess this ideology in order to get along? No. Those who are won over to this ideology should proclaim it and struggle for it. Those who are not convinced of it should say so. Those who disagree with it should say that. And there should be struggle. Something has to lead—the correct ideology that really enables people to get at the truth, and to do something with it in their interests, has to lead

want to live in. One in which not only do they not have to worry about where their next meal is coming from, or if they get sick whether they're going to be told that they can't have health care because they can't pay for it, as important as that is; but one in which they are actually taking up, wrangling with, and increasingly making their own province all the different spheres of society.

Achieving that kind of a society, and that kind of a world, is a very profound challenge. It's much more profound than simply changing a few forms of ownership of the economy and making sure that, on that basis, people's social welfare is taken care of, but you still have people who are taking care of that for the masses of people; and all the spheres of science, the

actually owning other human beings?"

Or what about the study of the depths of the depraved minds of Lyndon Johnson or Ronald Reagan, [laughter] who murdered millions of people, including vast numbers of children? "What must have gone wrong, somewhere in their childhood or somewhere else in their lives? [laughter] What demented ideas must they somehow have internalized that led them to believe that in the name of the shining city on the hill, or whatever [laughter], they had the right and the obligation to slaughter thousands and millions of innocent people?"

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And you cannot have a new society and a new world with the same outlook that people are indoctrinated and inculcated with in this society. You cannot have a real revolutionary transformation of society and abolition of unequal social as well as economic relations and political relations if people still approach the world in the way in which they're conditioned and limited and constrained to approach it now. How can the masses of people really take up the task of consciously changing the world if their outlook and their approach to the world remains what it is under this system? It's impossible, and this situation will simply reproduce the great inequalities in every sphere of society that I've been talking about.

The third alternative is a real radical rupture. Marx and Engels said in the *Communist Manifesto* that the communist revolution represents a radical rupture with traditional property relations and with traditional ideas. And the one is not possible without the other. They are mutually reinforcing, one way or the other.

If you have a society in which the fundamental role of women is to be breeders of children, how can you have a society in which there is equality between men and women? You cannot. And if you don't attack and uproot the traditions, the morals, and so on, that reinforce that role, how can you transform the relations between men and women and abolish the deep-seated inequalities that are bound up with the whole division of society into oppressors and oppressed, exploiters and exploited? You cannot.

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Achieving that kind of a society, and that kind of a world, is a very profound challenge. It's much more profound than simply changing a few forms of ownership of the economy and making sure that, on that basis, people's social welfare is taken care of, but you still have people who are taking care of that for the masses of people; and all the spheres of science, the arts, philosophy, and all the rest are basically the province of a few. And the political decision-making process remains the province of a few.

To really leap beyond that is a tremendous and world-historic struggle that we've been embarked on since the Russian revolution (not counting the very short-lived and limited experience of the Paris Commune)—and in which we reached the high point with the Chinese revolution and in particular the Cultural Revolution—but from which we've been thrown back temporarily.

So we need to make a further leap on the basis of summing up very deeply all that experience. There are some very real and vexing problems that we have to confront and advance through in order to draw from the best of the past, but go further and do even better in the future.

No Official Ideologies

Now I want to say a few things in this context about totalitarianism. Just as an aside here, I find it very interesting that you can read innumerable books delving deeply into the psyche of Stalin or Lenin or

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Or what about the study of the depths of the depraved minds of Lyndon Johnson or Ronald Reagan, [laughter] who murdered millions of people, including vast numbers of children? "What must have gone wrong, somewhere in their childhood or somewhere else in their lives? [laughter] What demented ideas must they somehow have internalized that led them to believe that in the name of the shining city on the hill, or whatever [laughter], they had the right and the obligation to slaughter thousands and millions of innocent people?"

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Still, there are some real questions that are raised about totalitarianism by the ideologues and the "intellectual camp followers" of the imperialists that do need to be taken on. In particular, they make the charge that in a society which they call totalitarian, but which is in reality the dictatorship of the proletariat, there is first of all an official ideology that everyone has to profess belief in, in order to get along in that society. And there is an official politics that everyone has to be involved in, in order to get along in that society and not get in trouble. Well, what about this?

Fundamentally, this is a distortion of what has gone on in socialist societies: why these revolutions were necessary in the first place, and what they were seeking to accomplish and to overcome, and how they were going about doing that. The reality is that, for the great masses of people in capitalist (and certainly in feudal) society, they are barred from really being involved in any significant way in official politics and the politics that actually affect the affairs of state and the direction of society. And they are indoctrinated with an outlook and methodology and ideology that prevents them—discourages them and actively obstructs them—from really understanding the world as it is and changing it consciously. And that is what socialist revolutions seek to change, as well as bring-

world in the way in which it is conditioned and limited and constrained to approach it now. How can the masses of people really take up the task of consciously changing the world if their outlook and their approach to the world remains what it is under this system? It's impossible, and this situation will simply reproduce the great inequalities in every sphere of society that I've been talking about.

The third alternative is a real radical rupture. Marx and Engels said in the *Communist Manifesto* that the communist revolution represents a radical rupture with traditional property relations and with traditional ideas. And the one is not possible without the other. They are mutually reinforcing, one way or the other.

If you have a society in which the fundamental role of women is to be breeders of children, how can you have a society in which there is equality between men and women? You cannot. And if you don't attack and uproot the traditions, the morals, and so on, that reinforce that role, how can you transform the relations between men and women and abolish the deep-seated inequalities that are bound up with the whole division of society into oppressors and oppressed, exploiters and exploited? You cannot.

So the third alternative is a real radical rupture in every sphere, a radically different synthesis, to put it that way. Or to put it another way, it's a society and a world that the great majority of people would actually

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To really leap beyond that is a tremendous and world-historic struggle that we've been embarked on since the Russian revolution (not counting the very short-lived and limited experience of the Paris Commune)—and in which we reached the high point with the Chinese revolution and in particular the Cultural Revolution—but from which we've been thrown back temporarily.

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But what about this question of official ideology that everyone has to profess? Well, I think we have more to sum up about that from the history of socialist society and the dictatorship of the proletariat so far.

With regard to the question of the party, I think two things are definitely true. One, you need a vanguard party to lead this revolution and to lead the new state. Two, that party has to have an ideology that unifies it, an ideology that correctly reflects and enables people to consciously change reality, which is communist ideology.

But, more broadly, should everyone in society have to profess this ideology in order to get along? No. Those who are won over to this ideology should proclaim it and struggle for it. Those who are not convinced of it should say so. Those who disagree with it should say that. And there should be struggle. Something has to lead—the correct ideology that really enables people to get at the truth, and to do something with it in their interests, has to lead; but that doesn't mean everyone should have to profess it,

The answer about the rights of the people cannot be reduced to the right to have a job and earn an income, as basic as that is. There is the question of are we really going to transform society so that in every respect, not only economically but socially, politically, ideologically, and culturally, it really is superior to capitalist society. A society that not only meets the needs of the masses of people, but really is characterized increasingly by the conscious expression and initiative of the masses of people.

in my opinion. And this is just my opinion. But it's worth digging into this a bit, it's worth exploring and wrangling with the question.

In China they used to have mass demonstrations in the main square, Tiananmen Square, in support of the Vietnamese people during the Vietnam war. A million and a half people would rally in Tiananmen Square. It was very powerful. Well, do you think that everybody who was there was really deeply committed to sacrificing to support the struggle of the Vietnamese people? And this did require real sacrifice on the part of the people of China. People went without things so that they could send aid to the Vietnamese people. They sent rice to Vietnam. People didn't eat that rice in China. Do you think that everyone was uniformly and deeply committed to that? I don't think so. There was undoubtedly an advanced force, and during the Cultural Revolution this became a huge force; but, as there always is, there were more advanced, more intermediate, and more backward people on that and every other question.

Well, here's a question to ponder and wrangle with. It's not an easy one to answer. Which is better: a demonstration of 200,000 people in Tiananmen Square who are deeply committed to this— or a demonstration of 2 million, some of whom are committed, but many of whom are, to varying degrees, less committed to it? That's a tough question. Because you're not operating in a vacuum. First of all, you've got the imperialists there. And they have their media. If you call a rally and say "those who really want to come out, come out" and 200,000 come out, the imperialists will say, "200,000, that's a pittance in China! Even in the capital city of Beijing, that's a pittance! That's pitiful! See—we told you—nobody really supports the Vietnamese, even in China they don't support them."

but as a very tumultuous one—and a volatile and chaotic one at times—through which a lot of things get brought forward and thrashed out by the masses. Now, this doesn't mean that we can just turn power back over to the bourgeoisie indirectly or inadvertently by "loosening the reins" so much that there's no core that's driving the society forward to where it needs to go and is leading the masses of people to ever more consciously and voluntarily strive for those things. But that shouldn't be seen as like just an engine on a track that's going straight ahead. It's a much more tumultuous and tortuous process where a lot of different things are going to get into the mix and a lot of different contradictions are going to be wrestled over, and a lot of different ideas are going to be brought forward about how to do that, and where increasingly the masses are being relied on and involved consciously in the process of thrashing these things out themselves.

Now that sounds good, but it's not easy. It's not easy to do that without giving up power. And if you give up power, what's the point? So these are things we have to do more work on, to understand more deeply—and, as soon as we can, to learn through the practice of actually having some new socialist states, some new dictatorships of the proletariat, where people seek to apply these lessons in a practical way, as well as continuing to wrangle with them in the realm of theory.

power altogether and the emergence of a community of freely associating human beings all over the world, a communist world where, to quote Mao, human beings consciously and voluntarily transform themselves and the objective world. And all this will be achieved through a wrenching process of struggle and wrangling, and not in some orderly, neat straight-line way, and not with uniformity of opinion about everything all the time, by any means.

So democracy under the dictatorship of the proletariat, democracy for the vast masses of people, has to take in all these dimensions. It doesn't just mean that they have the right to speak out freely without being suppressed—which it does mean and must mean—but it means much more than that. It means not only their ability to associate politically and to demonstrate and to criticize, to raise disagreements with the official policy at any given time, or even with the leading ideology at any given time. But it also means that this has to be done in such a way that it's moving toward the withering away, first of all of dictatorship—that is, rule in society by one class over another and its use of an apparatus of repression, that is, armed forces, police, courts, and so on, to enforce its rule and to suppress those who would seek to overthrow it. Not only do we have to be moving toward the eventual withering away of all this and developing and applying concrete steps which actually lead to that—not just mouthing the words that we're working toward

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Well, that has a concrete effect. You're not operating in a vacuum. On the other hand, if you just sort of say "okay, everybody gets off work, everybody in every unit, you all organize to go, and if you don't go you're going to be in for a lot of criticism"—well, that has problems too. This is not something that has an easy answer, but it's the kind of thing that needs to be wrangled with. We need to sum up this experience and learn more deeply. Sometimes it might be better to do one thing and sometimes another.

Fundamentally, you have to rely on people really being won to these things. But there is an element, you know, of coercion that plays a role in some of this. Someone, for example, commented on the movie *Remember the Titans*. I don't know if you all saw that movie (it's about the integration of a high school and the high school football team in Virginia in the early 1970s). This comrade pointed out that there was a certain positive role for coercion there. The schools were integrated and that was it—you had to deal with the reality of it. The football team was going to be integrated, that's it. If they had just gone to all the white people and said, "How would you like to integrate the school and the football team?" what do you think would have happened?

So it's not like there's no role for coercion, but even in that movie they worked through a lot of contradictions within the confines of what they were doing. If they hadn't worked through those contradictions, it

a lot of different contradictions are going to be wrestled over, and a lot of different ideas are going to be brought forward about how to do that, and where increasingly the masses are being relied on and involved consciously in the process of thrashing these things out themselves.

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Socialist society should be a very lively and vibrant society, full of wrangling and struggle over all kinds of questions, in which we're moving step by step to narrow and finally to eliminate the differences and inequalities that mean that some people are locked out of whole spheres of society. And at each stage there will be a very acute contradiction between holding onto power and continuing on the socialist road while at the same time drawing ever greater numbers of masses of people into this process, overcoming these inequalities to the greatest degree possible at every stage, and laying the basis to make further leaps in the future with regard to things that you cannot overcome at the present time.

The Role of Dissent in a Vibrant Society

As I have pointed out, socialist society should be a very lively and vibrant society, full of wrangling and struggle over all kinds of questions, in which we're moving step by step to narrow and finally to eliminate the differences and inequalities that mean that some people are locked out of whole spheres of society. But that's a process that's going to go through stages, and through twists and turns, and not in a straight upward line. And at each stage there will be a very acute con-

suppressed—which it does mean and must mean—but it means much more than that. It means not only their ability to associate politically and to demonstrate and to criticize, to raise disagreements with the official policy at any given time, or even with the leading ideology at any given time. But it also means that this has to be done in such a way that it's moving toward the withering away, first of all of dictatorship—that is, rule in society by one class over another and its use of an apparatus of repression, that is, armed forces, police, courts, and so on, to enforce its rule and to suppress those who would seek to overthrow it. Not only do we have to be moving toward the eventual withering away of all this and developing and applying concrete steps which actually lead to that—not just mouthing the words that we're working toward

this withering away, but actually developing concrete forms and institutions that lead in that direction. But, together with that, we also have to be moving toward the withering away of democracy.

That, of course, is a very controversial statement. What do I mean by that? What I mean is not that through the advance of the dictatorship of the proletariat there is less and less democracy for the masses of people, until eventually it's eliminated altogether! That's not what we mean by the withering away of democracy together with the withering away of dictatorship. What we mean is, in essence, the opposite of that. We mean that the forms and means are developed through which the masses of people, in a certain

well, that has a concrete effect. You must not operating in a vacuum. On the other hand, if you just sort of say “okay, everybody gets off work, everybody in every unit, you all organize to go, and if you don’t go you’re going to be in for a lot of criticism”—well, that has problems too. This is not something that has an easy answer, but it’s the kind of thing that needs to be wrangled with. We need to sum up this experience and learn more deeply. Sometimes it might be better to do one thing and sometimes another.

Fundamentally, you have to rely on people really being won to these things. But there is an element, you know, of coercion that plays a role in some of this. Someone, for example, commented on the movie *Remember the Titans*. I don’t know if you all saw that movie (it’s about the integration of a high school and the high school football team in Virginia in the early 1970s). This comrade pointed out that there was a certain positive role for coercion there. The schools were integrated and that was it—you had to deal with the reality of it. The football team was going to be integrated, that’s it. If they had just gone to all the white people and said, “How would you like to integrate the school and the football team?” what do you think would have happened?

So it’s not like there’s no role for coercion, but even in that movie they worked through a lot of contradictions within the confines of what they were doing. If they hadn’t worked through those contradictions, it would have turned from a good thing into a bad thing. And more fundamentally, in transforming society through revolutionary struggle, if you don’t work through these contradictions and increasingly bring forward people who are consciously and voluntarily fighting for these things, then you’re going to go backward after a certain period of time, especially under the pressure of everything you’re up against, including the imperialists in the world.

So there are not easy answers to these questions. We have some things to wrestle with more deeply and learn more fully about this question of official ideology that everybody has to profess and official politics that everybody has to take part in. And we should even allow—this is one of the things that our party has been stressing and I’ve been emphasizing in things I’ve written and talks I’ve given—we should not only allow but even encourage oppositional politics under the dictatorship of the proletariat, because we have to conceive of this process not as a neat and orderly one

some people are locked out of whole spheres of society. And at each stage there will be a very acute contradiction between holding onto power and continuing on the socialist road while at the same time drawing ever greater numbers of masses of people into this process, overcoming these inequalities to the greatest degree possible at every stage, and laying the basis to make further leaps in the future with regard to things that you cannot overcome at the present time.

The Role of Dissent in a Vibrant Society

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The challenge is one of developing and applying the correct principles and methods so that all of this develops in such a way that it serves the advance toward communism, toward a communist world, so that socialist society is a vital and vibrant society in which masses of people are, in a great diversity of ways, increasingly wrangling with and engaging all kinds of questions having to do with the nature and direction of society; and, through all this, not only is political power maintained in a way that serves the fundamental interests and needs of the masses of the people and the world revolution, but the advance is carried forward toward the eventual abolition of state

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As I spoke to in a series that was printed in the RW—excerpts from a talk I gave, “Getting Over the Two Great Humps”****—it means that the institutions and structures that are necessary to ensure that the rights of the people are upheld, and that one part of society, even among the people, is not being suppressed by another part—those structures and institutions no longer are necessary, and new structures and institutions are brought into being which correspond to and give expression to the fact that among the people there are no exploiters and exploited, there are no

Continued on page 14

****“On Proletarian Democracy and Proletarian Dictatorship: A Radically Different View of Leading Society,” excerpted from a talk by RCP Chairman Bob Avakian, “Getting Over the Two Great Humps: Further Thoughts on Conquering the World.” Published excerpts available online at rwor.org.

Part 6: A World We Would Want to Live In

Continued from page 13

profound social divisions that lead to exploiters and exploited. At that point it will no longer be a question in society about whether one group among the people is going to oppress and dominate another. We will have moved, both in material reality and in the thinking of the people, beyond the point where that is even a possibility, because the economic and social conditions have been brought into being and, together with them, the political structures and institutions and political processes, and the ways of thinking and the culture have developed in such a way that, the idea of one person, or one group in society, exploiting and oppressing another will be understood to be outrageous, absurd—and impossible.

Marx said about the future world, the world of communism, that it will seem as ridiculous and outrageous for one part of society to privately own the land, and everything that goes along with that, as it now seems for one human being to own another. Communism will mean that we have reached the point where the very idea that the way society should advance is for a few to benefit and then to proclaim that to be in the general interest of the society, where that idea will seem so ridiculous and outrageous that in a certain sense, to put it simply, it couldn't get a hearing. Where people would investigate what is the problem mentally [laughter]—what chemical imbalance has caused someone to talk in this way. [laughter]

Now we have to be careful, because dissent and people disagreeing with the established norm is always going to have to fight an uphill fight. This will undoubtedly be true in communist society as well. As Mao put it, newly emerging truths are always in the hands of a minority. So even under communism that will be true. The point is that there won't be organs of

Solid Core with a Lot of Elasticity

Now, another aspect of this that I want to speak to briefly is what I call "the synthesis of the points that were emphasized in the polemic against K. Venu and some arguments made by John Stuart Mill." Now, in this polemic against K. Venu I basically made the point that we can't have bourgeois democracy, we have to have the dictatorship of the proletariat. If we try to implement all these instrumentalities of mass democracy, without any distinction among the people, we are going to hand power back over to the bourgeoisie, after everything people have gone through to seize power in the first place, and all the sacrifice that that has required. In socialist society, we still have to have a vanguard party that leads, and we have to have an ideology that leads. Even if we don't want to insist that everybody has to profess that ideology whether they agree with it or not, we still have to have a vanguard party that leads, and an ideology that leads. This is one of the points that I was stressing in that polemic. But what I am referring to by synthesizing that, combining it in the correct way, with arguments of John Stuart Mill is that Mill makes the argument that no opinion should be discounted, let alone suppressed in society, until all those people who wish to argue for it have had an opportunity to do so. And he goes on further to make the point that it is not enough to hear ideas characterized by those who oppose them, it is necessary to hear them put forward by people who are ardent advocates of those ideas—in the book *Democracy Can't We Do Better Than That?***** I addressed this.

As you transform the material conditions, you transform the thinking of the people—so that individuals are thinking about their needs in relation to the larger interests of society, and are "naturally" subordinating their own individual interests to the larger interests of society, while still not obliterating the role and the needs of individuals and individuality. That requires a major ideological transformation.

of principles that I think are very important. One was actually articulated for me in a conversation that I had not long ago with a spoken word artist and poet. I was laying out to him how I saw socialist society and some of the same points that I'm making here about how we have to hang onto power and keep things going in a forward direction toward communism, while on the other hand there is a need for a lot of experimentation in the arts, a lot of critical thinking that needs to go on in the sciences and all these different spheres, and you have to let people take the ball and run with it, and not

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Now we have to be careful, because dissent and people disagreeing with the established norm is always going to have to fight an uphill fight. This will undoubtedly be true in communist society as well. As Mao put it, newly emerging truths are always in the hands of a minority. So even under communism that will be true. The point is that there won't be organs of political suppression, so that if you bring forward unpopular ideas or new and different proposals for how things ought to be, people might think you are odd, but you are not going to become the object of political suppression or of social suppression, even without a state.

You can see why this requires not only transformation of material, economic and social conditions, but also the thinking of the people. Even the slogan "from each according to their ability to each according to their needs" would never work under the present ideological conditions we have. What are my needs—well, you know, I need some new rims for my car. You could just go on, and the whole thing will come flying apart. This requires an ideological transformation where people see needs very differently. Needs are socially conditioned in any case. The idea that you need rims for your wheels is socially conditioned. That's not something that you thought of all on your own, in a vacuum. So, as you transform the material conditions, you transform the thinking of the people—so that individuals are thinking about their needs in relation to the larger interests of society, and are "naturally" subordinating their own individual interests to the larger interests of society, while still not obliterating the role and the needs of individuals and individuality. That requires a major ideological trans-

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Well, of course, as I spoke to earlier, what he argues for can never literally be implemented. There is always somebody who wants to make one more argument for an idea. [laughs] There does come a time when you have to close the debate, at least for the time being. There are material reasons underlying that, and there are also reasons of politics. Decisions have to get made at certain points. You can't just go on arguing endlessly and conducting searches to see if there is anybody else who wants to argue for a point of view that nobody else agrees with.

Still, there is a point that Mill is getting at with this argument that it's not enough to hear positions characterized by those who oppose them, it is necessary to hear ardent advocates arguing for these positions. This relates to something that I think we have to incorporate more into the dictatorship of the proletariat and the rule and transformation of society by the masses of people. And this goes along with not just tolerating but encouraging dissent: we have to allow for people to explore many different ideas, and to hear advocates of many different ideas—without giving up the whole game, without losing power, without undermining and destroying the dictatorship of the proletariat. And that, once again, is a very complex and acute contradiction.

In order to handle this correctly, there are a couple

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Then, as we discussed this for a while, he came up with what I thought was a very good formulation. He said, "It sounds to me like what you are talking about is 'a solid core with a lot of elasticity.'" And I said "yeah, you've really hit on something there," because that was exactly what I was trying to give voice to—that you have to have a solid core that firmly grasps and is committed to the strategic objectives and aims and process of the struggle for communism. If you let go of that you are just giving everything back to the capitalists in one form or another, with all the horrors that means. At the same time, if you don't allow for a lot of diversity and people running in all kinds of directions with things, then not only are people going to be building up tremendous resentment against you, but you are also not going to have the rich kind of process out of which the greatest truth and ability to transform reality will emerge.

So this is another expression of a very difficult contradiction that we have to learn how to handle a lot better. Mao had some good ideas about this, and struggled a lot to get the party to implement them. Mao was

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**** *Democracy: Can't We Do Better Than That?* by Bob Avakian. (Chicago: Banner Press, 1986)

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So this is another expression of a very difficult contradiction that we have to learn how to handle a lot better. Mao had some good ideas about this, and struggled a lot to get the party to implement them. Mao was wrangling with this, but he was only able to get so far with it. As he pointed out, human life is finite. He was only able to get so far with it, and then he died and what happened in China happened. And people—in particular the people now ruling that society—no longer were concerned with wrangling with that contradiction.

So we have to take this up and go further and learn to do even better with it the next time around. And in order for that to happen, those who are won to or seriously grappling with the question of this whole revolutionary process have to start engaging these questions now, and prepare ourselves as well as bring forward broader and broader ranks of the masses to be wrangling with these things, so that when we do seize power here and there, we are further along in our ability to be dealing with these things in a much more practical sense, even while, as I said, continuing to wrangle with them in the realm of theory.

TO BE CONTINUED

Elections: Then and Now



Angry Florida voters demand a manual count of the uncounted ballots, November, 2000.

Continued from page 5
Party the White House!

This reveals starkly that, at the height of the bourgeois political apparatus, preserving the stability of the system, avoiding the risk of a constitutional crisis over the presidency, and nurturing the legitimacy of President Bush was more important—to all the senators and to Al Gore himself—than daring to unleash the people to struggle over the election, or even having the decency to uphold the basic legal rights of Black people!

Stealing the Election 2004

All during this current 2004 election season, there are renewed exposures of preparations to steal the coming election.

On September 27, former President Jimmy Carter took the unprecedented step of charging publicly, in a *Washington Post* column, that the Florida state plans for the 2004 election do not meet “basic international requirements” for fair elections and could undermine the legitimacy of the coming U.S. election. Carter, famous for organizing poll observers all over the world, charged that Florida Governor Jeb Bush had “taken no steps to correct these departures from principles of fair and equal treatment or to prevent them in the future.” He added that: “A fumbling attempt has been made recently to disqualify 22,000 African Americans (likely Democrats), but only 61 Hispanics (likely Republicans), as alleged felons.”

Florida’s new Secretary of State Glenda Hood tried to run the same “purging felons” scam in the 2004 elections, coming up with a list of 48,000 names to be purged from voter rolls—almost half of whom were Black. Hood first tried keep the list secret. After lawsuits forced her to turn over the list, the *Miami Herald* reported that at least

actions to intimidate Black and Latino voters in a number of states (in “Bullies at the Voting Booth” by Anne-Marie Cusac, October 2004).

- In Michigan, John Pappageorge, a Republican state representative, said, “If we do not suppress the Detroit vote, we’re going to have a tough time in this election cycle.” In line with Pappageorge, the Republican Party of Michigan announced that it planned to recruit 1,000 poll watchers to monitor elections. A Republican spokesperson told the *Detroit Free Press* that the GOP would assign 300 of those to Oakland County—where there is a heavily Black population.

What can people expect from these “poll watchers”? In the 1999 election, a group calling itself “Citizens for a Better Hamtramck” went to the polling centers in Hamtramck, Michigan, and approached people who appeared to be Arab.

“As people were standing outside waiting to vote, this group took it upon itself to ask people to prove they were citizens,” says Laila Al-Qatami, communications director for the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. “They were asking voters to step aside and say an oath of citizenship, even if they were capable of producing a U.S. passport.”

- On the ballot in Arizona this November is an anti-immigrant referendum called “Protect Arizona Now” or Proposition 200, which would require special proof of citizenship for anyone registering to vote. According to *The Progressive* magazine there are rumors that anti-immigrant “poll watchers” will appear on election day to intimidate Latino voters. Vigilante supporters of the initiative showed up at polling places during Arizona’s September primary wearing misleading black T-shirts with “U.S. Constitutional Enforcement” on the

Arizona Republican Party. Sproul has run registration drives in Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia, and Florida, in addition to Oregon and Nevada.

Black Box Voting

In 2004 about one-third of all votes will be cast on direct-recording-electronic (DRE) computers. Votes cast on these computers vanish into the machines the moment they are cast. There are no paper ballots and no paper records, and so it is literally not possible to do a re-count if there are suspicions of voter fraud. The potential here for stealing elections in new ways is obvious to everyone.²

Of the five private companies that manufacture these machines, at least two have strong ties to the Republican Party. Election Systems and Software (ES&S), whose machines will count more than half of all of the votes, is owned by an investment firm whose CEO is a large contributor to the Republican Party.

Another 8 or 9 million votes will be tallied by computers supplied by Diebold, whose CEO, Walden O’Dell, caused a scandal by declaring that he would help deliver his home state of Ohio to George W. Bush.

“The system is in crisis,” Professor David Dill of Stanford University told a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. “The American public is voting on machines where there’s very little protection of their votes. I don’t think there’s any reason to trust these machines.”

Over 1,600 computer experts have signed a petition demanding that electronic voting machines not be used unless they offer a paper trail.

Already there have been a number of suspicious incidents linked to the new machines.

and from the intense hostile tone of bourgeois politics, that the Bush forces consider any political challenger to be illegitimate. They believe they have a right to hold power by any means necessary, and they believe they can seize permanent control of the whole state—the White House, Congress, the Supreme Court and military officer corps—far into the next century. They openly argue that John Kerry is favored by the terrorists and that a Kerry election would mean that the U.S. would be hit again. And the logic of their position suggests that they may well be willing to steal the coming election again—or cancel it if they look likely to lose.

There is a genuinely fascist tone to much of this.

And, to the distress and frustration of millions of people, the Democrats have repeatedly shown that they are unwilling and unlikely to lead any real struggle over this—not only have they backed dangerous police-state moves like the Patriot Act, but they haven’t even resisted when they, themselves, are barred from the White House in a crudely stolen election.

Here we are in 2004 and the system is up to the same old Jim Crow tactics to deny Black people the right to vote. Outrageous!

These moves by the Bush camp to deny people basic political and legal rights need to be exposed and opposed. At the same time, people need to have the sophistication to grasp that whoever wins the election, the people are in big trouble.

Everyone who is opposed to the whole agenda of war and repression and all the other injustices of the system, including the historic and ongoing oppression of Black people, needs to realize that the will of the people cannot be expressed in this election.

(See editorial, page 2)

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Florida's new Secretary of State Glenda Hood tried to run the same "purging felons" scam in the 2004 elections, coming up with a list of 48,000 names to be purged from voter rolls—almost half of whom were Black. Hood first tried keep the list secret. After lawsuits forced her to turn over the list, the *Miami Herald* reported that at least 2,100 were actually eligible voters. Apparently Latino names had been eliminated from the list—perhaps because the large reactionary Cuban exile population in south Florida makes the Latino vote there much more heavily Republican than elsewhere in the U.S.

This exposure forced Governor Jeb Bush to drop these plans to purge voters.

In August, *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert exposed that Florida was investigating "Get Out the Vote" drives among Black people in Orlando by sending armed police officers to intimidate scores of people—mainly Black and elderly—who had filed for absentee ballots. Those interviewed reported that police tapped on their ankle holsters in a threatening manner as they questioned them about requesting absentee ballots.

"I felt threatened, embarrassed and like I was accused of being a criminal," one person wrote in a statement.

Intimidation at the Polls

The *Progressive* magazine has published an extensive exposure of Republican

Black population. What can people expect from these "poll watchers"? In the 1999 election, a group calling itself "Citizens for a Better Hamtramck" went to the polling centers in Hamtramck, Michigan, and approached people who appeared to be Arab.

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The *Progressive* also documents organized efforts to intimidate Black, Latino and Native American voters in Missouri, Florida, New Mexico and South Dakota.

Destroying Voter Registration Forms

"Voters Outreach of America," a company paid by the Republican Party to register voters, systematically destroyed registration forms filled out by Democrats, perhaps disenfranchising thousands of voters in Nevada and Oregon. A former employee told a Las Vegas television news program that his supervisor tore up registration forms submitted by Democrats in front of him. "We caught her taking Democrats out of my pile, she handed them to her assistant, and he ripped them up right in front of us. I grabbed some of them out of the garbage and she tells her assistant to get those from me."

"Voters Outreach of America" is run by Nathan Sproul, the former head of the

stealing elections in new ways is obvious to everyone.²

Of the five private companies that manufacture these machines, at least two have strong ties to the Republican Party. Election Systems and Software (ES&S), whose machines will count more than half of all of the votes, is owned by an investment firm whose CEO is a large contributor to the Republican Party.

Another 8 or 9 million votes will be tallied by computers supplied by Diebold, whose CEO, Walden O'Dell, caused a scandal by declaring that he would help deliver his home state of Ohio to George W. Bush.

"The system is in crisis," Professor David Dill of Stanford University told a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. "The American public is voting on machines where there's very little protection of their votes. I don't think there's any reason to trust these machines."

Over 1,600 computer experts have signed a petition demanding that electronic voting machines not be used unless they offer a paper trail.

Already there have been a number of suspicious incidents linked to the new machines.

In an election for a seat in the Florida House of Representatives touch-screen machines recorded 127 blank ballots. The race was won by 12 votes. No recount was possible because there was nothing to recount.

In an election in Indiana last year, an electronic system recorded more than 144,000 votes in an election with fewer than 19,000 registered voters.

Deadly Serious Stakes

"And I think one of the things that is very serious to consider, is that these people grouped around Bush... actually consider any other group of people being the government of this society as being completely illegitimate."

Bob Avakian, "The Pyramid of Power"

"I don't know how many national elections you can take to the Supreme Court and not at some point have an explosion in this country."

Leon Panetta,
White House Chief of Staff under Clinton

It seems clear, from the 2000 election

steal the coming election again, or cannot it if they look likely to lose.

There is a genuinely fascist tone to much of this.

And, to the distress and frustration of millions of people, the Democrats have repeatedly shown that they are unwilling and unlikely to lead any real struggle over this—not only have they backed dangerous police-state moves like the Patriot Act, but they haven't even resisted when they, themselves, are barred from the White House in a crudely stolen election.

Here we are in 2004 and the system is up to the same old Jim Crow tactics to deny Black people the right to vote. Outrageous!

These moves by the Bush camp to deny people basic political and legal rights need to be exposed and opposed. At the same time, people need to have the sophistication to grasp that whoever wins the election, the people are in big trouble.

Everyone who is opposed to the whole agenda of war and repression and all the other injustices of the system, including the historic and ongoing oppression of Black people, needs to realize that the will of the people cannot be expressed in this election. (See editorial, page 3)

And the most important thing is to unite with others to *express* and make it very clear that, whoever wins, there is no way that the election results can be interpreted as a mandate to continue the war in Iraq and the whole agenda that has been set in motion by Bush and company.

At the same time, it is *not* in the interest of the proletariat to have bourgeois democratic rights crushed, and it *is* in the interests of the proletariat to *fight* the crushing of bourgeois democracy. It is an irony of history that it often falls to the proletariat—and has historically been part of the proletarian revolution—to fulfill certain tasks that sections of the bourgeoisie are incapable of fulfilling—such as the fight to prevent the elimination of certain bourgeois rights. And then it falls to the proletariat to take that up and make it part of going somewhere else—that is, part of preparing the masses for revolution.

We do not know what election 2004 will bring, but it is going to be something big.

We cannot know the future, but we need to be prepared for it.

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[Reverend Earl Kooperkamp, Pastor,
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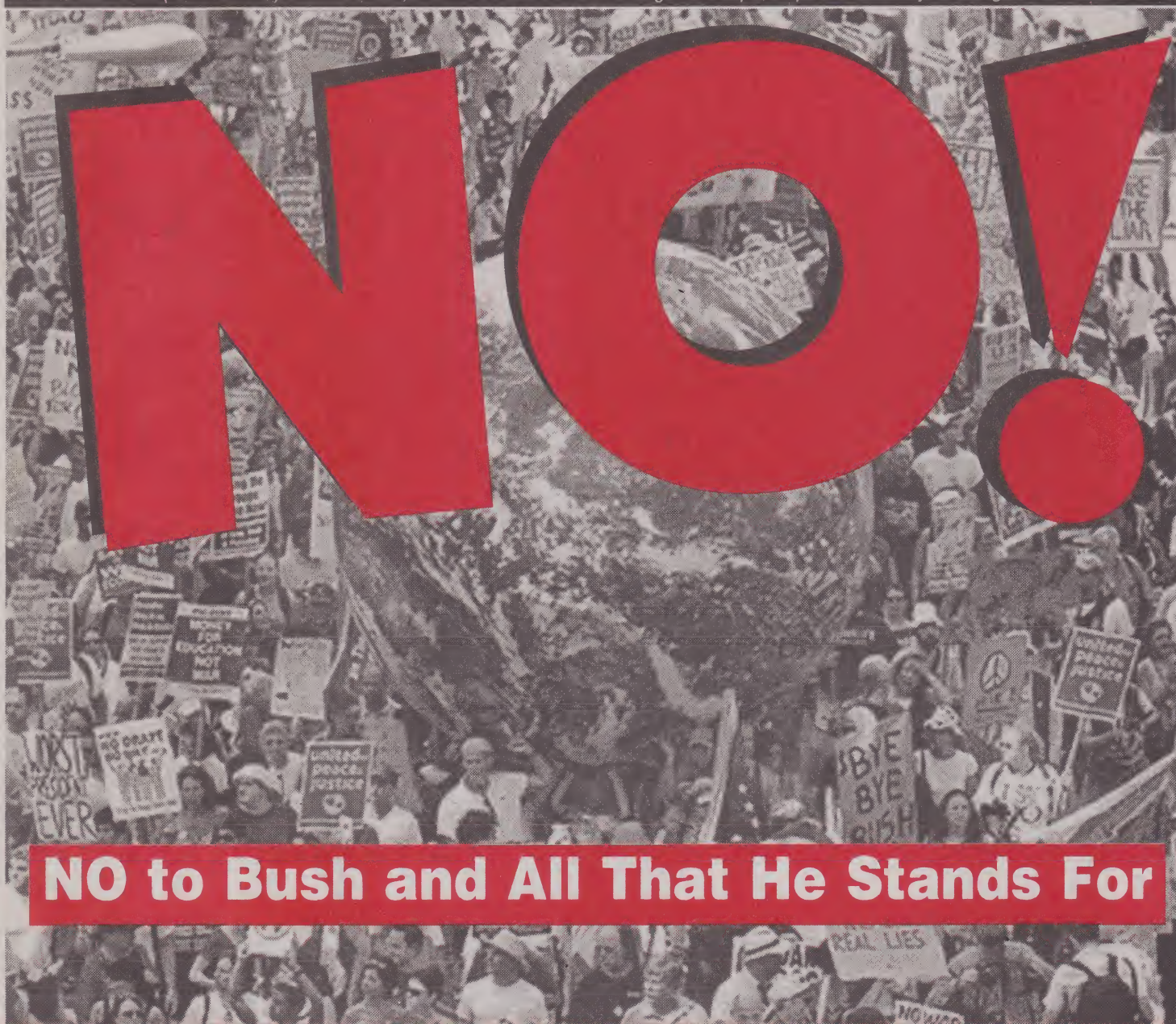
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